2
うぶめのなつ
姑獲鳥の夏
原作 京極夏彦
作画 志水アキ
怪

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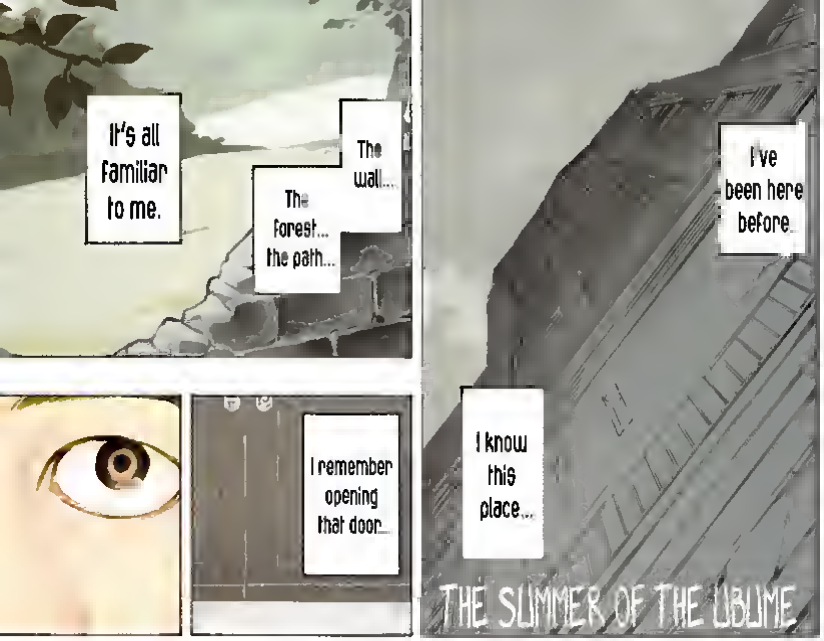
The Summer of the Ubume

& KYOUGOKU NATSUHIKO
SHIMIZU AKI

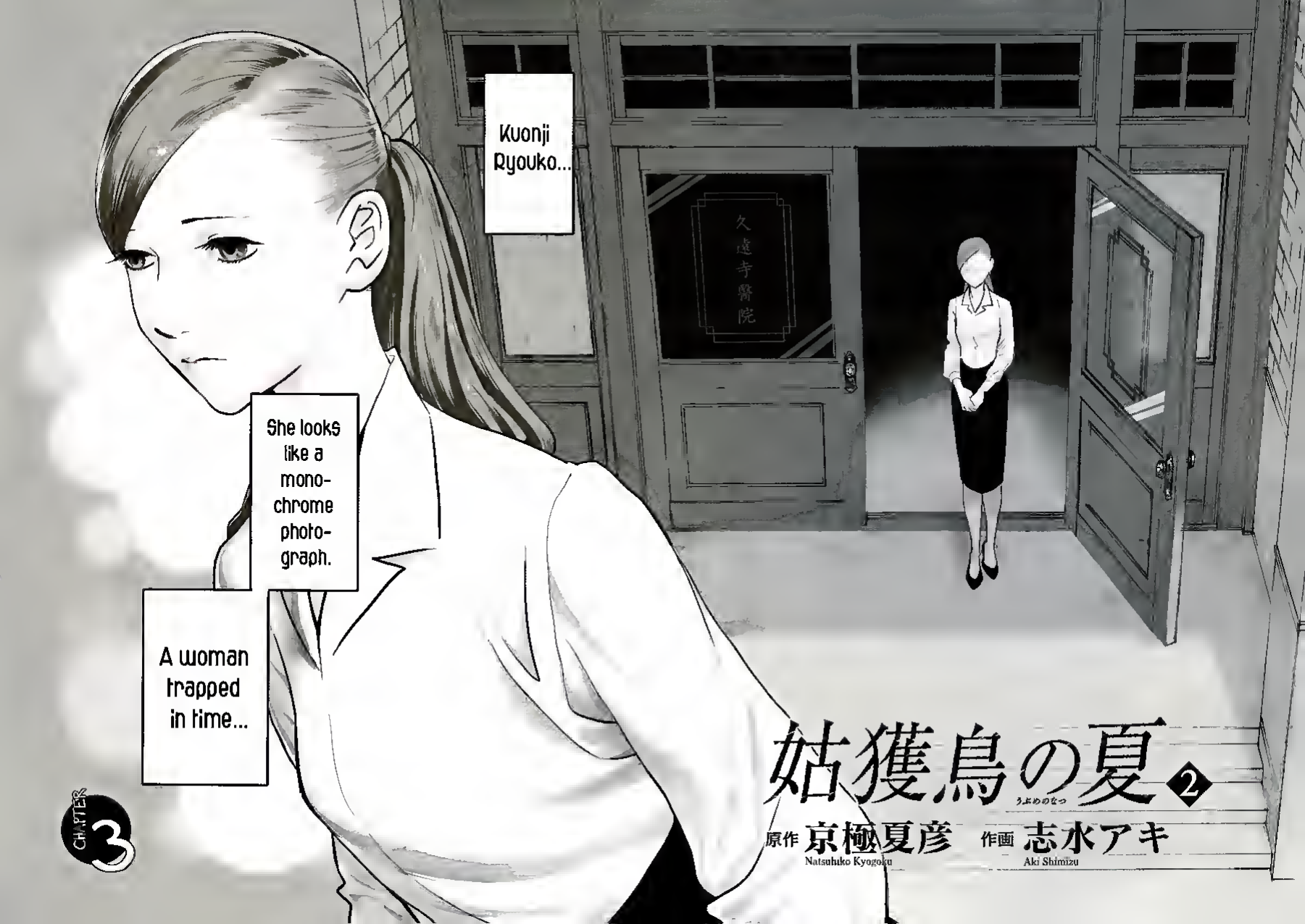
If you like this series, you'll be happy to know that three more of Kyougoku Natsuhiko's supernatural murder mystery short stories have recently been published in English as "The Wicked and the Damned: 100 Tales of Karma." The books are less than a dollar on Amazon, so take a look!

Unfortunately, the English-language novel version of "The Summer of the Ubume" is out of print and has become rather expensive (no Kindle book). But if Kyougoku's other stuff sells well, perhaps there's a possibility of another print run... and maybe even official translations for the rest of the series. I can hope, anyway.

ひきがね
& TRANSLATION TYPESETTING SANA

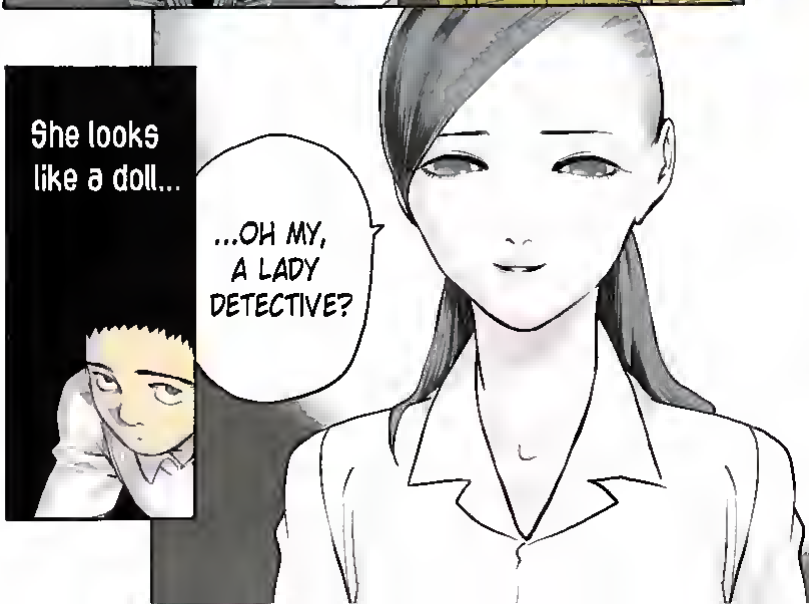

It's all familiar to me.
The forest... the path...
The wall...
I've been here before.
I know this place...
I remember opening that door...
THE SUMMER OF THE UBUME

KUONJI HOSPITAL
久遠寺醫院
When was I here before?
But when?

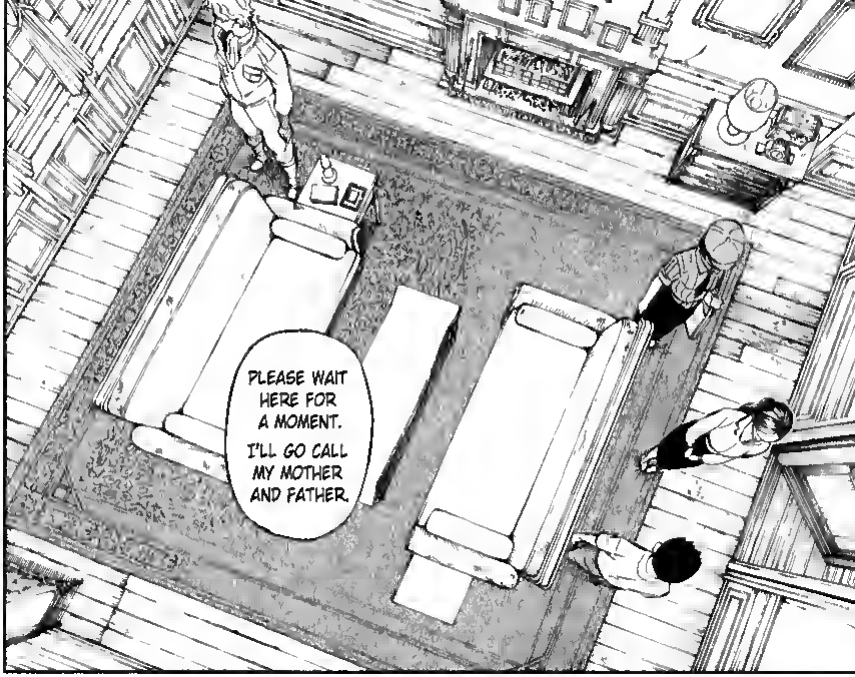

Kuonji Ryouko...
She looks like a mono-chrome photo-graph.
A woman trapped in time...
CHAPTER 3
姑獲鳥の夏 2
うぶめのなつ
原作 京極夏彦 Natsuhiko Kyogoku
作画 志水アキ Aki Shimizu

I'M A DETECTIVE. SO IT'S MY JOB TO BE SUSPICIOUS OF PEOPLE.
NAH, IT'S NOTHING. SORRY ABOUT YESTERDAY.
THANK YOU FOR TAKING THE TROUBLE TO COME.

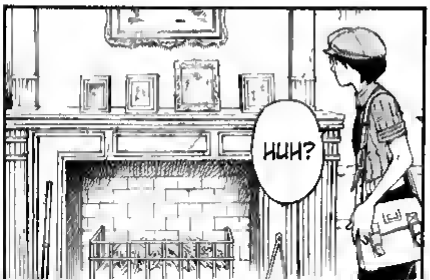
N-NICE TO MEET YOU!
BY THE WAY, THAT'S MY NEW ASSISTANT, CHUUZENJI ATSUKO-KUN! SHE'S MUCH MORE USEFUL THAN SEKI-KUN

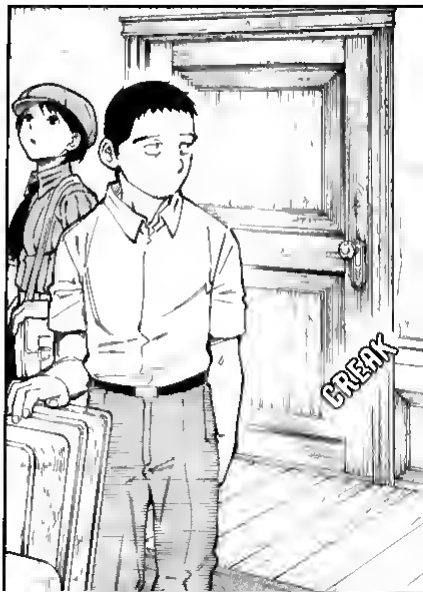

She looks like a doll...
...OH MY, A LADY DETECTIVE?

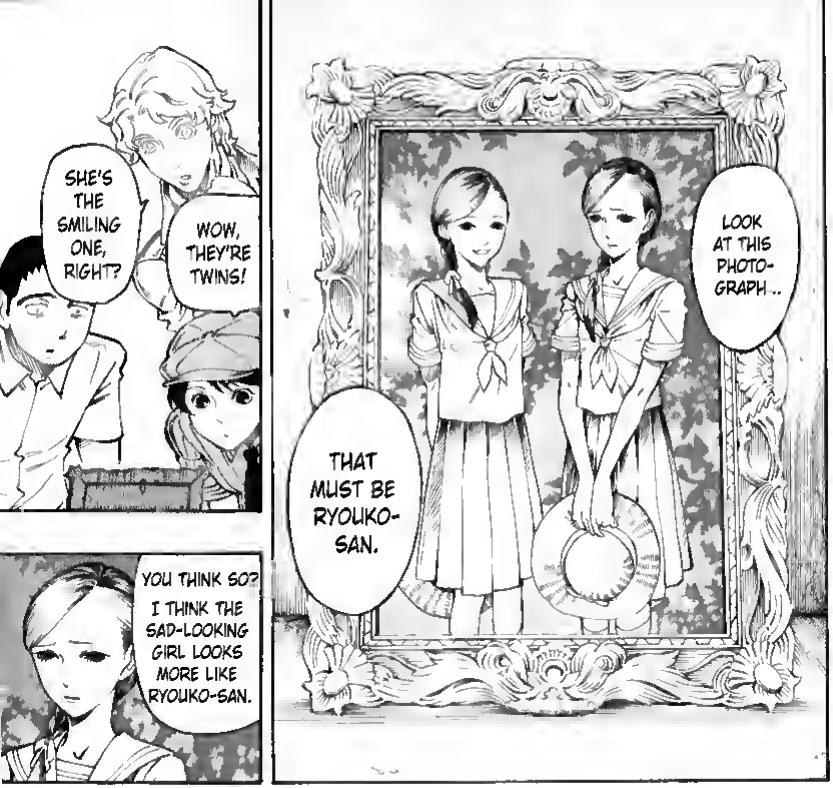
AH... THAT'S FINE, I SUPPOSE.
OH, AND I APOLOGIZE IN ADVANCE IF I HAVE TO LEAVE SUDDENLY.
SUPER IMPORTANT TOP SECRET DETECTIVE BUSINESS, YOU KNOW?
stumble
...I wouldn't put it past him to get bored and run off.
But it looks like a lot of things have been broken and patched back together...
Whoa, this place is fancy.


PLEASE WAIT HERE FOR A MOMENT.
I'LL GO CALL MY MOTHER AND FATHER.

NOW I SEE WHY YOU WERE TALKING IN POETRY, SENSEI!
WOW, SHE'S A REAL BEAUTY!


HUH?


CREAK


SHE'S THE SMILING ONE, RIGHT?
WOW, THEY'RE TWINS!
LOOK AT THIS PHOTO-GRAPH..
THAT MUST BE RYOUKO-SAN.
YOU THINK SO?
I THINK THE SAD-LOOKING GIRL LOOKS MORE LIKE RYOUKO-SAN.

When did I meet Kuonji Kyouko!?
If the sad one is Ryouko-san, then the other girl must be her sister!
But... when did I meet that girl?
I've seen that smiling girl before!

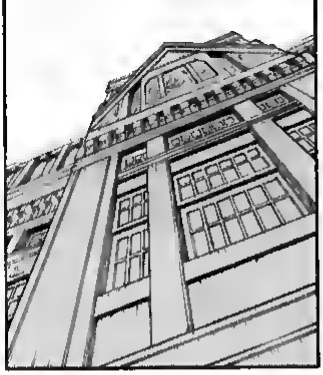
THAT BOY MUST BE CRAZY!

I was delivering Fujimaki's love letter.
A love letter.
久遠寺
It's ridiculous, isn't it?
I've fallen in love with a sixteen-year-old girl, and I can't even bring myself to talk to her.
You and Chuuzenji are the only people who don't laugh at me.
If you're going to think less of me for it, then I won't ask you to do this...
I won't be angry if you refuse.
Chuuzenji said that I should put my feelings into a letter...
Please, help me...
I need you to take this letter to her.
You must think I'm pathetic.
And if she does actually respond... then somehow I'll find the courage to go to her myself.

NOTE The letter says "Kuonji."

The hospital must be somewhere nearby
You must give the letter to her directly.
Her name is Kuonji Kyouko.
UM, EXCUSE ME, I'M LOOKING FOR A BIG HOSPITAL AROUND HERE..
A HOSPI-TAL?
UM...
THERE'S NOTHING BUT GRAVES AROUND HERE, BOY.
UM...
AH...
OI, CAN'T YOU TALK?
WHERE ARE YOUR MANNERS, KID?

GASP
HE SAYS HE'S LOOKING FOR A HOSPITAL?
I BET HE ESCAPED FROM THE INSANE ASYLUM IN SUGAMO
THAT BOY MUST BE CRAZY!
THAT BOY MUST BE CRAZY!
Every-one else is crazy!!
I'm not crazy...
I'm sane! I'm not crazy!!
I'm not crazy! I'm not crazy!!

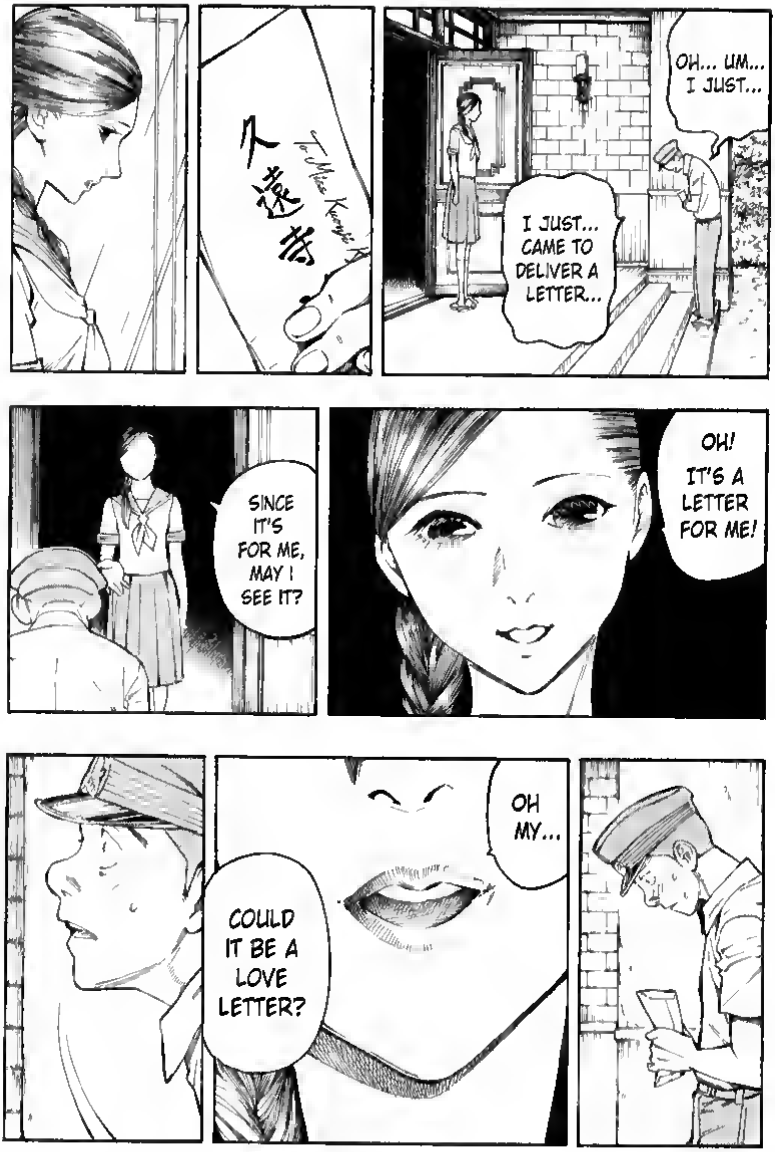


BUZZ
BUZZ

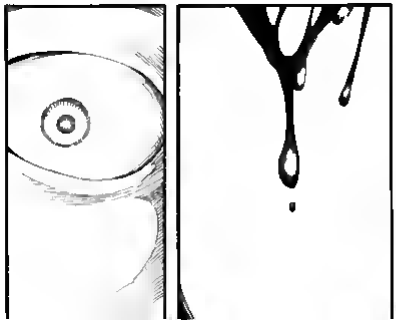
GASP
GASP

UM... EXCUSE ME...

I'M SORRY, BUT OFFICE HOURS ARE OVER FOR THE DAY.


久遠寺
OH... UM... I JUST...
I JUST... CAME TO DELIVER A LETTER...
SINCE IT'S FOR ME, MAY I SEE IT?
OH! IT'S A LETTER FOR ME!
OH MY...
COULD IT BE A LOVE LETTER?

DID YOU WRITE IT?
久遠寺



DO YOU WANT TO PLAY WITH ME?

What's happening?
No...
I'm not crazy!!
Everyone else is crazy!!

That girl...
That girl must be crazy!!
...SHE'S CRAZY!!!

ARE YOU OKAY? YOU LOOK PALE.
OH, I, UH...

SEKIGUCHI-SENSEI?

I WAS DELIVERING A LOVE LETTER FOR FUJIMAKI-SAN...
I'VE BEEN TO THIS HOSPITAL BEFORE...
I JUST REMEMBERED SOMETHING.

SO THE OTHER DAY, ENO-SAN MUST HAVE CAUGHT A GLIMPSE OF MY MEMORIES, NOT RYOUKO-SAN'S.
WELL, IT DOES CLEAR UP ONE MYSTERY... IT WASN'T RYOUKO-SAN WHO I MET, IT WAS HER SISTER, KYOUKO-SAN

SO WHAT? IT CAN'T POSSIBLY BE RELATED TO THIS CASE.
OH! SO THERE REALLY WAS A LOVE LETTER!

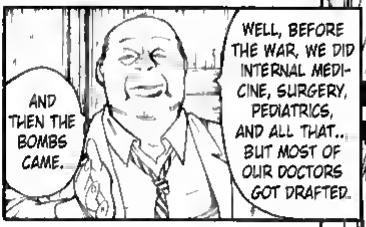
NOPE, I'M PRETTY SURE IT WASN'T THAT...
.....?

WHY ARE YOU BRINGING STRANGERS INTO OUR HOUSE AND TELLING THEM ALL ABOUT OUR PRIVATE MATTERS?
TCH...
PLEASE FORGIVE ME, MOTHER.
I THOUGHT THAT PERHAPS ENOKIZU-SENSEI COULD HELP US.
THAT'S NOT THE POINT!
SO, MR. DETECTIVE, WHAT SHOULD WE TALK ABOUT?
And that's her husband, Kuonji Yoshichika, the head doctor
The woman is the hospital's director of operations, Kuonji Kikuno

AS YOU CAN PROBABLY TELL, BUSINESS HAS BEEN IN A SLUMP LATELY.
THERE'S ONLY ONE NURSE WORKING TODAY.
AND WE'VE GOT JUST ONE ONE PATIENT IN THE MATERNITY WARD.

SO COME ON, MR DETECTIVE. ASK US ANYTHING.
DON'T SAY THAT IN FRONT OF OUTSIDERS!
IT'S TRUE, THOUGH

WAHAHAHA
LATELY, I FEEL MORE LIKE A MIDWIFE THAN A DOCTOR!


AND THEN THE BOMBS CAME.
WELL, BEFORE THE WAR, WE DID INTERNAL MEDICINE, SURGERY, PEDIATRICS, AND ALL THAT.. BUT MOST OF OUR DOCTORS GOT DRAFTED.

TWO OF OUR THREE BUILDINGS WERE HIT.
THE AMERICANS MUST HAVE MISTAKEN THE HOSPITAL FOR A MILITARY FACILITY, SO THEY DROPPED EXPLOSIVES ON US.

THIS SURE IS A BIG HOSPITAL... BUT YOU ONLY DO OBSTETRICS AND GYNECOLOGY?

THE KUONJI FAMILY HAS PRACTICED OBSTETRICS FOR GENERATIONS.
BUT WHY NOT CHOOSE TO SPECIALIZE IN SOMETHING MORE LUCRATIVE, LIKE SURGERY?
WA HA HA HA
MAKIN' BABIES AND DIGGIN' GRAVES!
BUT THERE ARE ONLY TWO STEADY BUSINESSES AFTER A WAR...
ACTUALLY, I USED TO BE A SURGEON.
THAT WAS IN SHIKOKU, RIGHT?
YES, IN SANUKI PROVINCE.
FROM THE 3RD YEAR OF THE KYOUHOU ERA (1717) TO THE MEIJI RESTORATION (1868), THE KUONJI FAMILY WERE TRUSTED PHYSICIANS TO A SAMURAI LORD.
THE KUONJI FAMILY EARNED THE LORD'S FAVOR BY SAFELY DELIVERING HIS HEIR AFTER A DIFFICULT PREGNANCY.
BY THE WAY, DO YOU EVER GO ON FAMILY VACATIONS?
AH?

I...
MISS, DO YOU REMEMBER THAT TRIP?
WE WENT TO HAKONE.
VACATIONS? HMM...
I DON'T THINK WE'VE GONE ANYWHERE SINCE THE 14TH YEAR OF SHOWA (1939)
OH, SHE'S ALWAYS BEEN SICKLY, SO SHE STAYED HOME.
THE POOR GIRL'S GOT A WEAK HEART AND ASTHMA, AND SHE CAN'T TOLERATE SUN... ACTUALLY, THIS IS THE BEST SHE'S LOOKED IN AGES.
THE TRUTH IS... I COULD DIE AT ANY MOMENT.
I SEE.. WELL, THAT'S ENOUGH CHITCHAT.
MY ASSISTANT HAS SOME QUESTIONS FOR YOU, THOUGH!
HUH?

Makio-san has locked himself in the library and he won't come out!!
I DIDN'T KNOW THAT ANYTHING HAD HAPPENED UNTIL KYOUKO CAME TO ME THE NEXT MORNING.
WELL, WE REMODELED THE OLD PEDIATRIC WARD INTO AN APARTMENT FOR THE YOUNG COUPLE, SO IT'S SEPARATE FROM THE MAIN HOUSE.
OKAY, CAN YOU TELL ME WHAT YOU REMEMBER ABOUT THE NIGHT OF THE DISAPPEARANCE?
I guess I'll have to handle the real investigation
TOKIZOU WAS ONE OF OUR EMPLOYEES. HE LIVED HERE UNTIL LAST SPRING.
AND I DIDN'T KNOW ANYTHING UNTIL THAT AFTERNOON, WHEN I SAW TOKIZOU AND NAITOU CARRYING TOOLS AND HEADED TOWARDS THE ANNEX.
OH, UH...
GLARE
IF WE'D HEARD ANYTHING THAT OBVIOUS, WE WOULDN'T HAVE ANY NEED FOR A DETECTIVE!
SO YOU DIDN'T HEAR ANY STRANGE NOISES OR SOUNDS OF A STRUGGLE?

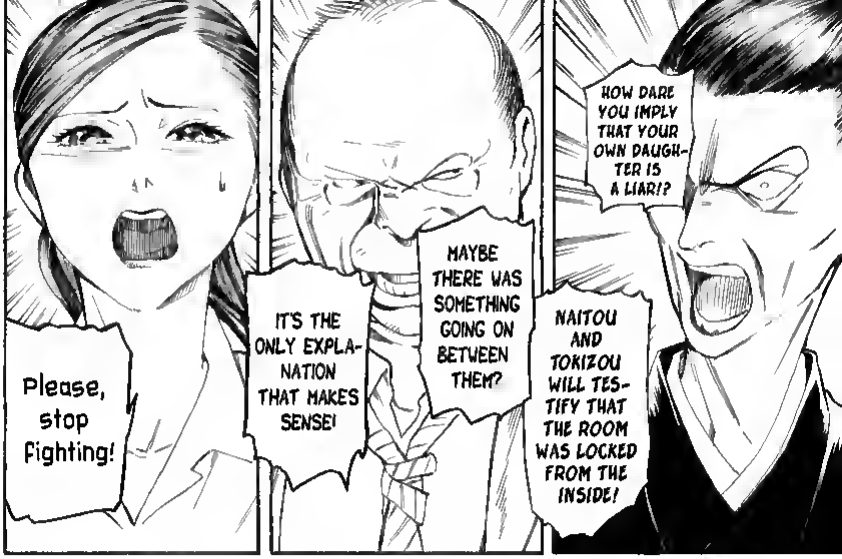
THAT MAN HAS CURSED OUR FAMILY!
.....
CURSED?
BLINK
UM... WELL, WHAT DO YOU THINK HAPPENED TO HIM?

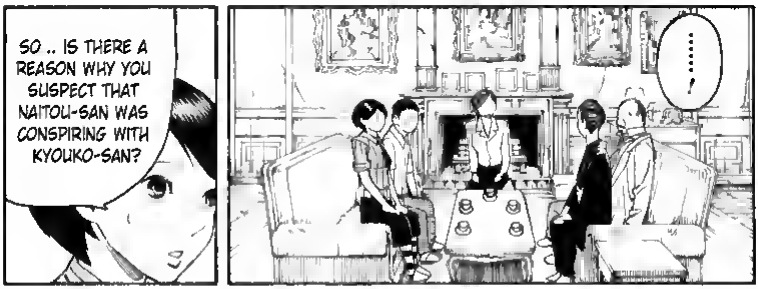
I'M SURE HE'S OFF SOMEWHERE LAUGHING AT THOSE DREADFUL RUMORS AND CURSING MY POOR KYOUKO!
I'M SURE OF IT! HE MUST HAVE HAD SOME GRUDGE AGAINST OUR FAMILY SO HE MARRIED MY DAUGHTER AS PART OF HIS WICKED PLOT.

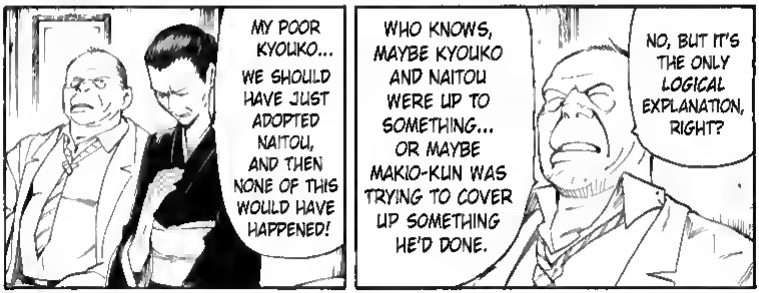
SHOCK
HMM.. ANY IDEA WHY HE MIGHT BEAR A GRUDGE AGAINST YOUR FAMILY?

THIS IS ALL HIS FAULT..
I JUST KNOW IT!

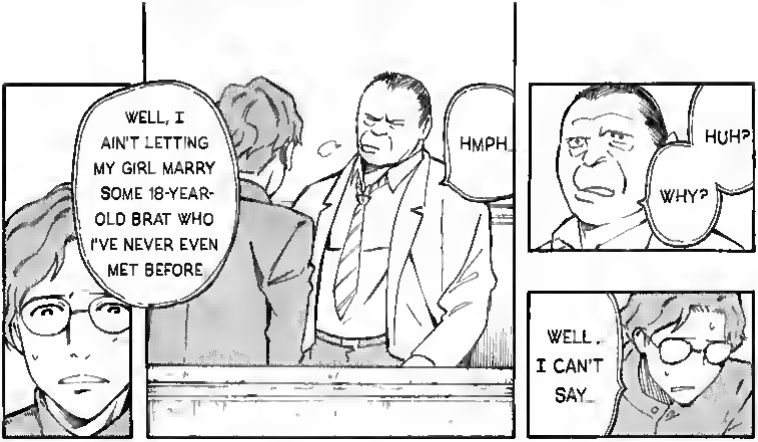
BUT WHAT OTHER REASON CAN THERE BE? HE DISAPPEARED FROM A LOCKED ROOM
HE MUST HAVE USED SOME SORT OF EVIL MAGIC.
...I HAVEN'T THE SLIGHTEST IDEA
WE'VE DONE NOTHING TO DESERVE SUCH HATRED.
?
GLANCE
SHOCK
HA! I'M A MAN OF SCIENCE.
THERE ARE NO MYSTERIES IN THIS WORLD.
BUT SIR, WASN'T KYOUKO-SAN A WITNESS IN THE NEXT ROOM?
THE OBVIOUS EXPLANATION IS THAT MAKIO-KUN NEVER "DISAPPEARED."
HE SIMPLY OPENED THE DOOR AND WALKED OUT!
SO THE WHOLE STORY ABOUT HIM LOCKING HIMSELF IN THE LIBRARY WAS A LOAD OF BULLSHIT.
THAT'S RIGHT.
DO I NEED TO SPELL IT OUT?


Please, stop fighting!
IT'S THE ONLY EXPLANATION THAT MAKES SENSE!
MAYBE THERE WAS SOMETHING GOING ON BETWEEN THEM?
NAITOU AND TOKIZOU WILL TESTIFY THAT THE ROOM WAS LOCKED FROM THE INSIDE!
HOW DARE YOU IMPLY THAT YOUR OWN DAUGHTER IS A LIAR!?

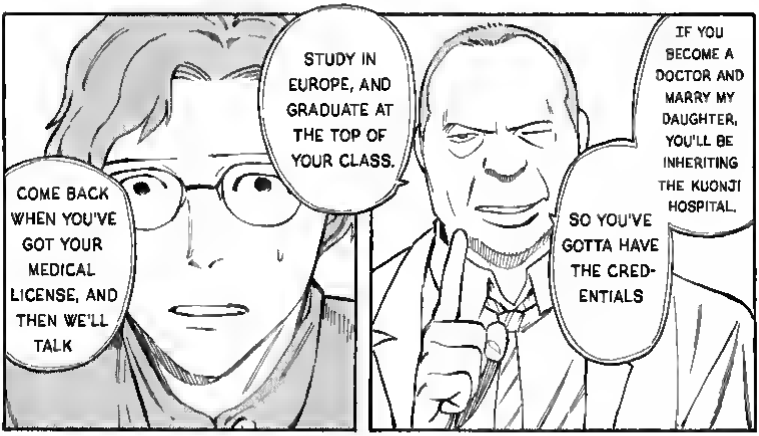

SO .. IS THERE A REASON WHY YOU SUSPECT THAT NAITOU-SAN WAS CONSPIRING WITH KYOUKO-SAN?
.....!

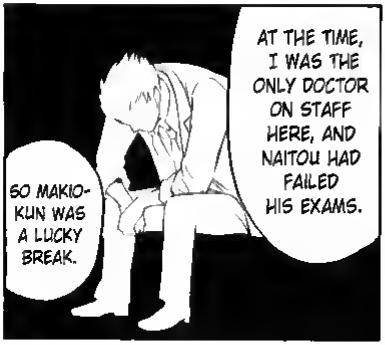

MY POOR KYOUKO... WE SHOULD HAVE JUST ADOPTED NAITOU, AND THEN NONE OF THIS WOULD HAVE HAPPENED!
WHO KNOWS, MAYBE KYOUKO AND NAITOU WERE UP TO SOMETHING... OR MAYBE MAKIO-KUN WAS TRYING TO COVER UP SOMETHING HE'D DONE.
NO, BUT IT'S THE ONLY LOGICAL EXPLANATION, RIGHT?

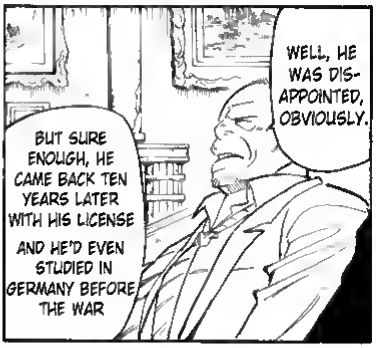
MM.
IT MUST HAVE BEEN ABOUT TEN YEARS BEFORE THE WAR...
PRO-MISED...?
NOT THIS SHIT AGAIN... WHY WOULD WE ADOPT A DOCTOR WHO'S FAILED THE IMPERIAL MEDICAL EXAM THREE TIMES!?
MAKIO-KUN CAME TO US WITH MEDICAL LICENSE IN HAND, JUST LIKE HE PROMISED!
YOU AGREED TO IT TOO
YOU WANT TO MARRY KYOUKO!?
YES!
I LOVE HER... AND I ABSOLUTELY MUST MAKE HER MY WIFE!


WELL, I AIN'T LETTING MY GIRL MARRY SOME 18-YEAR-OLD BRAT WHO I'VE NEVER EVEN MET BEFORE
HMPH
HUH?
WHY?
WELL... I CAN'T SAY...

YOU SAY YOU WANNA BE A DOCTOR, RIGHT?
LISTEN TO ME, KID
BUT SIR..!


COME BACK WHEN YOU'VE GOT YOUR MEDICAL LICENSE, AND THEN WE'LL TALK
STUDY IN EUROPE, AND GRADUATE AT THE TOP OF YOUR CLASS.
SO YOU'VE GOTTA HAVE THE CRED-ENTIALS
IF YOU BECOME A DOCTOR AND MARRY MY DAUGHTER, YOU'LL BE INHERITING THE KUONJI HOSPITAL.

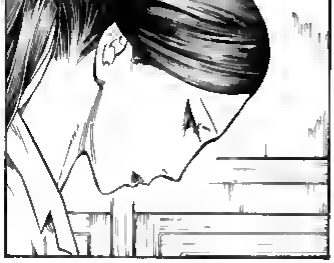

AT THE TIME, I WAS THE ONLY DOCTOR ON STAFF HERE, AND NAITOU HAD FAILED HIS EXAMS.
SO MAKIO-KUN WAS A LUCKY BREAK.

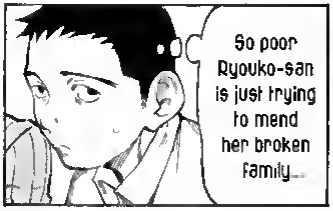

WELL, HE WAS DIS-APPOINTED, OBVIOUSLY.
BUT SURE ENOUGH, HE CAME BACK TEN YEARS LATER WITH HIS LICENSE
AND HE'D EVEN STUDIED IN GERMANY BEFORE THE WAR

.....

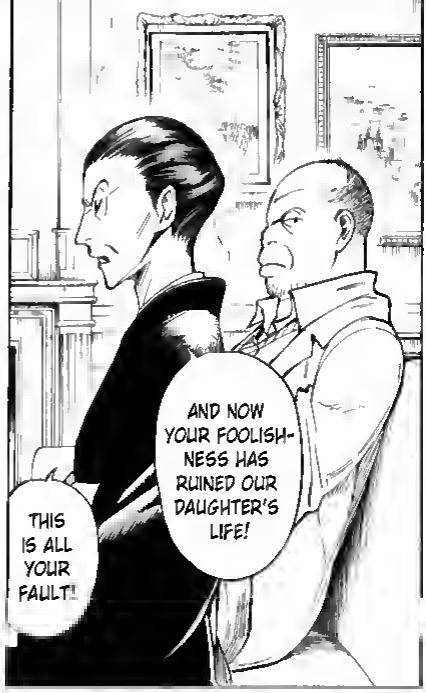
And if she does actually respond...
Then somehow I'll find the courage to go to her myself.

Wow, that's intense
Fujimaki-sempai couldn't even deliver a love letter without my help, but he spent seven years in Germany to win that girl



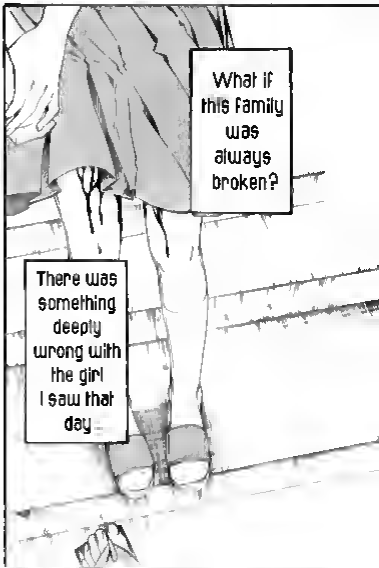

So poor Ryouko-san is just trying to mend her broken family...

But...


THIS IS ALL YOUR FAULT!
AND NOW YOUR FOOLISHNESS HAS RUINED OUR DAUGHTER'S LIFE!

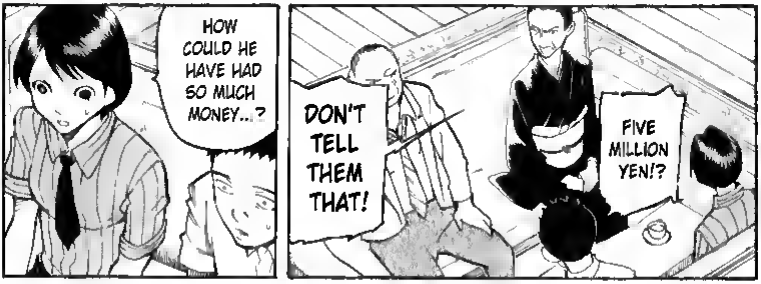
Or was that whole scene just one of my fantasies?
Am I delusional?

Was Fujimaki-sempai really in love with her?


What if this family was always broken?
There was something deeply wrong with the girl I saw that day...

HAHAHA, WELL YOU ONLY HAVE TO TAKE ONE LOOK AT THIS PLACE TO KNOW THAT HE WASN'T LOOKING TO MARRY INTO THE KUONJI FAMILY FOR THE MONEY!
THERE MUST HAVE BEEN A REASON WHY MAKIO-SAN WAS SO INSISTENT ON MARRYING KYOUKO-SAN, RIGHT?
IN ANY CASE, MAKIO-KUN BROUGHT HIS OWN MONEY WITH HIM WHEN HE CAME HERE.
FIVE MILLION YEN!

NOTE Over 300 million yen in today's money, or over 3 million US dollars.



I BET YOU'RE ASKING WHY THIS PLACE IS SUCH A SHIT-HOLE WHEN WE'VE GOT MONEY.
O-OH, IT'S NOT THAT...
HE BROUGHT IT ALL WITH HIM WHEN HE CAME BACK.
HE'S FROM A RICH FAMILY IN YAMANASHI. HE INHERITED A LOT OF LAND, SO HE SOLD IT AND MADE A GOOD PROFIT.
YOU DETEC-TIVES ARE ALWAYS SO SUSPICIOUS!

Well, that's all very interesting and all, but it doesn't have anything to do with the case, does it?

WAHAHAHA
HA! WELL, THE MONEY'S GONE NOW!

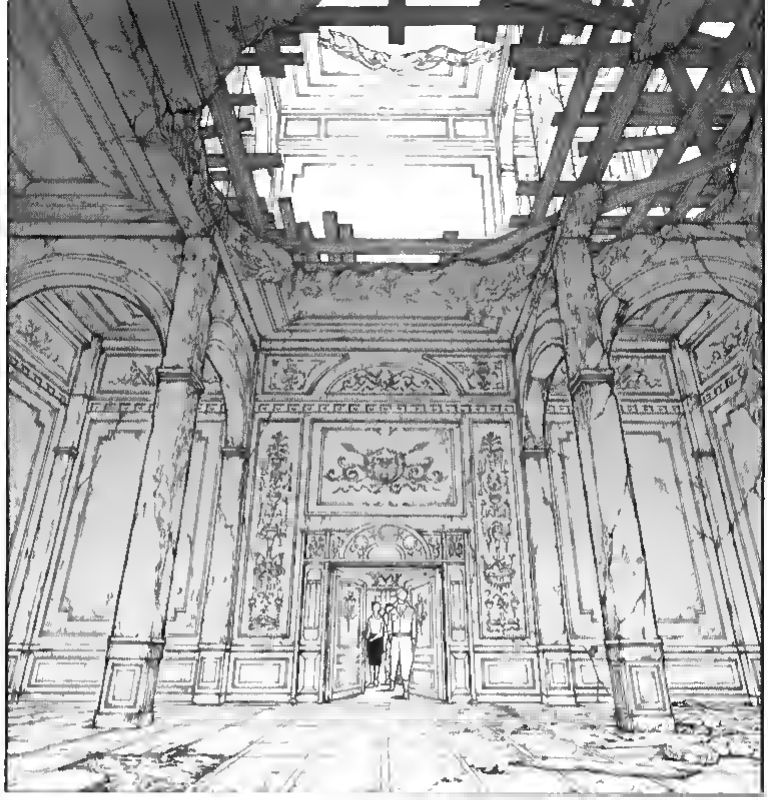
KEEPING THE CLINIC OPEN BLEW THROUGH ALL THAT CASH.
RIGHT, DEAR?

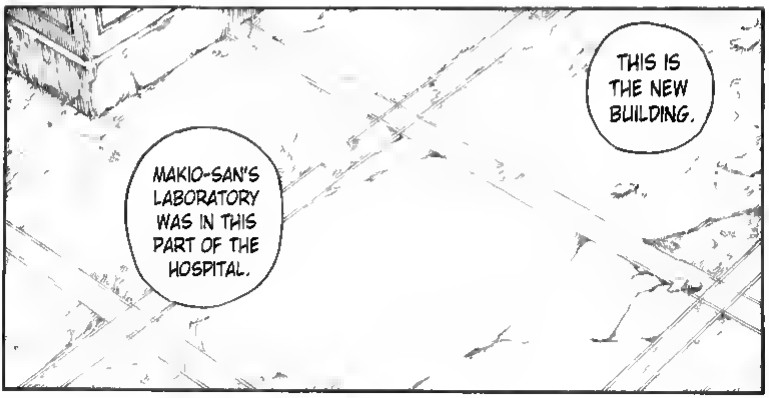
.....

silence...

I GUESS NOT THERE'S NO POINT IN COMPLAINING ABOUT THE PAST
RIGHT, MRS. DIRECTOR?
Five million yen.
It doesn't look like they spent any of the money on fixing the hospital.
PERHAPS WE SHOULD MOVE ON?
OH, RIGHT, THEY'LL WANT TO LOOK AT THE ROOM WHERE HE DISAPPEARED
Oh, one more question!
When you went on vacation in Hakone, where did you stay?

...WE ALWAYS STAYED AT A PLACE CALLED THE SENGOKU-ROU INN.
IT'S BEEN THERE SINCE THE EDO PERIOD.
WE HAVEN'T BEEN THERE IN OVER A DECADE, THOUGH
THIS IS THE ANNEX...
MOST OF IT HAS BEEN ABANDONED




THIS IS THE NEW BUILDING.
MAKIO-SAN'S LABORATORY WAS IN THIS PART OF THE HOSPITAL.

Wow, what a mess!
HEY, RYOUKO-SAN!
ARE THESE THE DETECTIVES YOU WERE TALKING ABOUT?

THAT'S NAITOU...
SO YOU'RE INVESTI-GATING, HUH?

WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY THAT?
WHAT ARE YOU IMPLYING ABOUT MAKIO-SAN!?
WELL, IT'S TRUE THAT THE DOCTOR DISAPPEARED, BUT IF YOU ASK ME, HE'S NOT THE VICTIM OF SOME CRIME.
HE'S THE PERPE-TRATOR.
REVENGE? BUT WHY?
I'M SAYING THAT HE VIOLATED MEDICAL ETHICS AND USED KYOUKO-SAN AS A HUMAN GUINEA PIG.
BECAUSE HE WANTED REVENGE.
IN THE WORST POSSIBLE WAY.
HE AND KYOUKO-SAN NEVER CARED MUCH FOR EACH OTHER TO BEGIN WITH... EVENTUALLY THEIR FEELINGS TURNED TO HATE.
HE WANTED TO GET EVEN...

I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOUR SISTER TOLD YOU,
BUT I HEARD THEM FIGHTING EVERY DAY!
KYOUKO WOULDN'T ...!!
MY SISTER LONGS FOR MAKIO-SAN TO RETURN!
THAT'S RIDICU-LOUS!
WHEN IT'S OPEN, YOU CAN HEAR EVERYTHING THAT GOES ON IN THE OTHER BUILDING.
SEE THAT WINDOW?
IT WOULD HAVE BEEN LIKE GETTING BETWEEN TWO RABID DOGS!
I EVEN THOUGHT ABOUT STOPPING THEM, BUT YOU KNOW...
THEY WERE REALLY AT EACH OTHER'S THROATS THAT DAY.

WELL . KYOUKO-SAN LOOKED TERRIBLE, DIDN'T SHE?
AND THEN...

HUH?

Wow, that must have been scary!

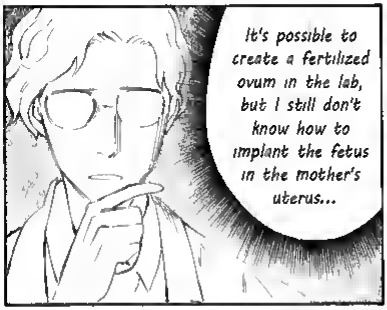
Eno-san saw something!
!

HM, I SEE... THEN TELL ME, DID MAKIO-SAN SHUT THE DOOR HIMSELF?
D-DOOR? WHAT DOOR?

HEY, WAIT A MINUTE! I WAS JUST EAVESDROPPING - I DIDN'T SEE ANYTHING!!

SHOCK
THE DOOR TO THE LIBRARY.
THE ONE YOU BROKE DOWN WITH A SLEDGE-HAMMER.
SO THE IMPORTANT THING IS THAT YOU FIND HIM SOON!
I JUST WANT TO PUT AN END TO THIS WHOLE FUCKED UP SITUATION!!
IN ANY CASE, I THINK MAKIO-SAN MUST STILL BE ALIVE SOMEWHERE!
I... I HAVE NO IDEA WHAT YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT!
BUT I THINK HE WAS TRYING TO CREATE A HOMUNCULUS.
...I DON'T KNOW THE SPECIFICS.
SLUMP
UM, NAITOU-SAN, WHAT EXACTLY WERE THESE MEDICAL EXPERIMENTS THAT MAKIO-SAN WAS DOING?

BUT THAT'S NOT SCIENCE.
IT'S MAGIC.
IT'S AN ARTIFICIAL HUMAN CREATED BY ALCHEMY.
PEOPLE CLAIMED THAT IF YOU MIXED THE RIGHT INGREDIENTS IN A GLASS BOTTLE, YOU COULD CREATE LIFE...
Homun-kurusu? What's that?


It's possible to create a fertilized ovum in the lab, but I still don't know how to implant the fetus in the mother's uterus...

HE TOLD ME A LITTLE ABOUT HIS WORK.
...Do you think it's possible for a parent to love a child that wasn't conceived through sexual intercourse?
SHIT LIKE THAT.

THOSE TWO NEVER CONSUMMATED THEIR MARRIAGE, NOT EVEN ONCE!
WELL, IT SURE AS HELL AIN'T HIS.
WAIT, DO YOU MEAN THAT KYOUKO-SAN'S CHILD IS ..

NAITOU!!
I'VE HAD ENOUGH OF YOUR ACCUSATIONS!!
IF YOU DON'T BELIEVE ME, WHY DON'T YOU ASK KYOUKO-SAN?
WELL, I GUESS SHE FELT LIKE SHE COULDN'T TALK ABOUT IT WITH FAMILY.
BUT I'M AN OUTSIDER... I'M THE ONLY ONE SHE COULD CONFIDE IN.
SHE NEEDED ME. HER MOTHER'S A BITCH. HER FATHER IS A BLOWBAG.
AND YOU...

SPUTTER
Oh, so is the child yours, then?
IF THAT'S MY CHILD...
IF... IF THAT'S TRUE...
WELL, NAITOU? IS IT?
YOU CAN ACCUSE ME IF YOU WANT, BUT THAT DOESN'T EXPLAIN WHAT HAPPENED TO KYOUKO-SAN! YOU OUGHTA BE LOOKING FOR THE BASTARD WHO DID THIS TO HER— I JUST WANT THIS ALL TO BE OVER!!
IT'S BEEN MORE THAN NINE MONTHS!! IF THAT'S MY CHILD, WHY HASN'T IT BEEN BORN!?
THEN WHY THE HELL WON'T IT COME OUT!?

...IT SOUNDS LIKE YOU'RE ADMITTING THAT YOU HAD AN AFFAIR WITH MY SISTER.
BELIEVE WHATEVER YOU WANT.
THE ONE WHO'S SUFFERING THE MOST HERE...
IS KYOUKO-SAN!!
OH YEAH, HE LEFT OVER FIFTY NOTEBOOKS FULL OF SCRIBBLING.
I'M JUST AN IDIOT WHO'S FAILED THE IMPERIAL MEDICAL EXAM THREE TIMES, YOU KNOW.
I TRIED READING IT, BUT NONE OF IT MAKES ANY GODDAMNED SENSE TO ME
UM, SO WHAT HAPPENED TO MAKIO-SAN'S RESEARCH DATA?
MAYBE THERE'S A CURE TO BE FOUND?

THAT BASTARD HAS NOTHING BUT CONTEMPT FOR ME...
BUT HE WON'T LISTEN TO A THING I SAY.
THE BOSS? I ASKED HIM ABOUT IT,
WELL, WHAT DID THE HEAD DOCTOR SAY?
THIS IS JUST SIMPLE EMBRYOLOGY RESEARCH NOTHING UNUSUAL
HMPH
LISTEN TO ME, BOY.
YOU NEED TO LET GO OF THIS.
THE STRESS OF FAILING THE EXAM HAS MADE YOU DELUSIONAL
MAKIO-KUN IS AN UPSTANDING YOUNG MAN, NOT SOME KIND OF MAD SCIENTIST
FLIP
BUT... BUT JUST LOOK WHAT HE DID TO KYOUKO-SAN!

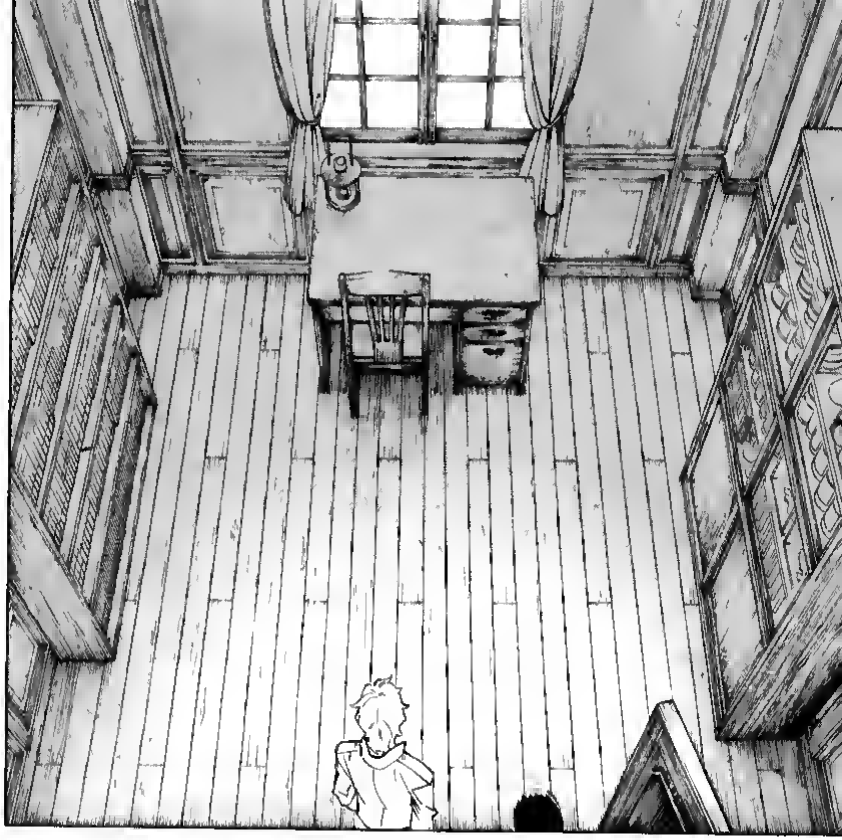
YOU SAID HE WANTED "REVENGE..."
AND THE DIRECTOR'S WIFE SAID THE SAME THING... SHE SAID THAT MAKIO-SAN HAD A "GRUDGE" AGAINST THE KUONJI FAMILY.
B-BUT IF THE MARRIAGE WAS THAT BAD, WHY DIDN'T HE JUST GET A DIVORCE?
WHY WOULD HE GO SO FAR AS TO CONDUCT MEDICAL EXPERIMENTS ON HIS WIFE?
INSTEAD OF "REVENGE," LET'S JUST SAY THAT HE WAS "VENTING HIS FRUST-RATIONS."
.....
EITHER AGAINST HIS WIFE, OR AGAINST THE FAMILY IN GENERAL?
DO YOU KNOW OF ANY REASON WHY HE MIGHT HAVE WANTED REVENGE?
I... I SEE...
WELL THEN, CAN YOU TELL ME ANYTHING ELSE ABOUT THE DAY THAT MAKIO-SAN DISAPPEARED?
THAT GUY HAD A LOT OF PENT-UP FRUST-RATIONS.
AND GOD DAMN...
GRIN

CRASH
HE'D BEEN WORKING LATE IN THE LAB, AND ALL HELL BROKE LOOSE WHEN HE GOT BACK TO THE BEDROOM.
A LITTLE BEFORE MIDNIGHT, I THINK.
AT WHAT TIME DID YOU HEAR THE TWO OF THEM ARGUING?
CHILD-REN!?
AH HEIR!?
They were really going at it but they'd settled down by 2 AM
After that, I went to bed
But then...
YOU EXPECT ME TO PRODUCE AN HEIR!?
GET OUT!!
I WISH YOU WOULD JUST GO DIE!!

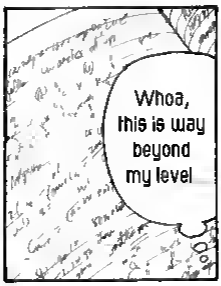
I've been calling to him, but he won't answer..
We had a terrible fight last night, and...
I'm worried that he might have...
HUH? MAKIO SAN LOCKED HIMSELF IN THE LIBRARY AND HE WON'T COME OUT?
The next morning...
NAITOU!
NAITOU!!
HE'S YOUR FATHER'S FAVORITE, AFTER ALL.
WHY DON'T YOU TELL YOUR FATHER ABOUT IT?
GODDAMN IT, WHY IS SHE DRAGGING ME INTO HER MARRIAGE TROUBLES..?
I... I WENT OVER TO THEIR APARTMENT IN THE AFTERNOON, AROUND 1 O'CLOCK.
KYOUKO-SAN WAS CRYING, AND WE COULDN'T OPEN THE LIBRARY DOOR...
IT WAS A FUCKING NIGHTMARE.
OF COURSE SHE DID.
SO KYOUKO-SAN CAME TO YOU FOR HELP FIRST?

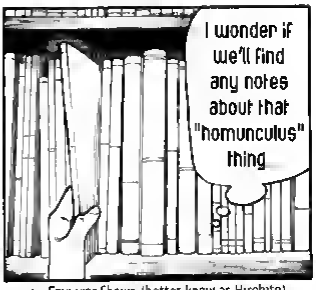
HE PROBABLY HUNG HIMSELF.
I BET HE'S HANGING THERE LIKE A PIECE OF MEAT.
Makio-san!
UWAH!!
Oh God... I told him that I wished he was dead...
Makio-san, please say something!
OI, TOKIZOU! LET'S BREAK DOWN THIS DOOR!
YES, SIR!
ISN'T THAT RIGHT?
I BELIEVE THAT YOU WERE THE ONE WHO STRUCK THE BLOW THAT BROKE THE LOCK, ACTUALLY.
I DON'T REMEMBER. WE WERE BOTH HAMMERING AT IT. THIS PLACE MAY BE RUN DOWN, BUT THE DOORS ARE STURDY.
WAS TOKIZOU-SAN THE ONE WHO BROKE THE DOOR?

WHO WAS THE FIRST PERSON TO ENTER THE ROOM?
ANYWAY, WHEN WE FINALLY GOT THE DOOR OPEN, THERE WAS NOBODY INSIDE.
WHATEVER, WHO CARES ABOUT THAT?
AS FOR TOKIZOU AND HIS WIFE, TOMIKO-SAN.. I DON'T THINK THEY WENT IN.
THEY JUST STOOD OUTSIDE.
puffff
IT WAS KYOUKO-SAN.
SHE PUSHED PAST ME TO GET IN.
BUT THE TRUTH IS THAT...
I HATE THAT MAN.
BUT THAT SORT OF THING IS VERY IMPORTANT TO MOTHER
NAITOU IS SUPPOSEDLY A DESCENDANT OF THE SAMURAI LORD WHO THE KUONJI FAMILY ONCE SERVED.. WELL, HE'S MORE OF A DISTANT RELATIVE.



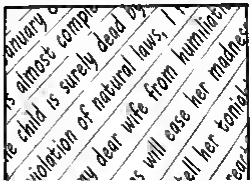
So this is Fujimaki-sempai's lab...
It's... normal.



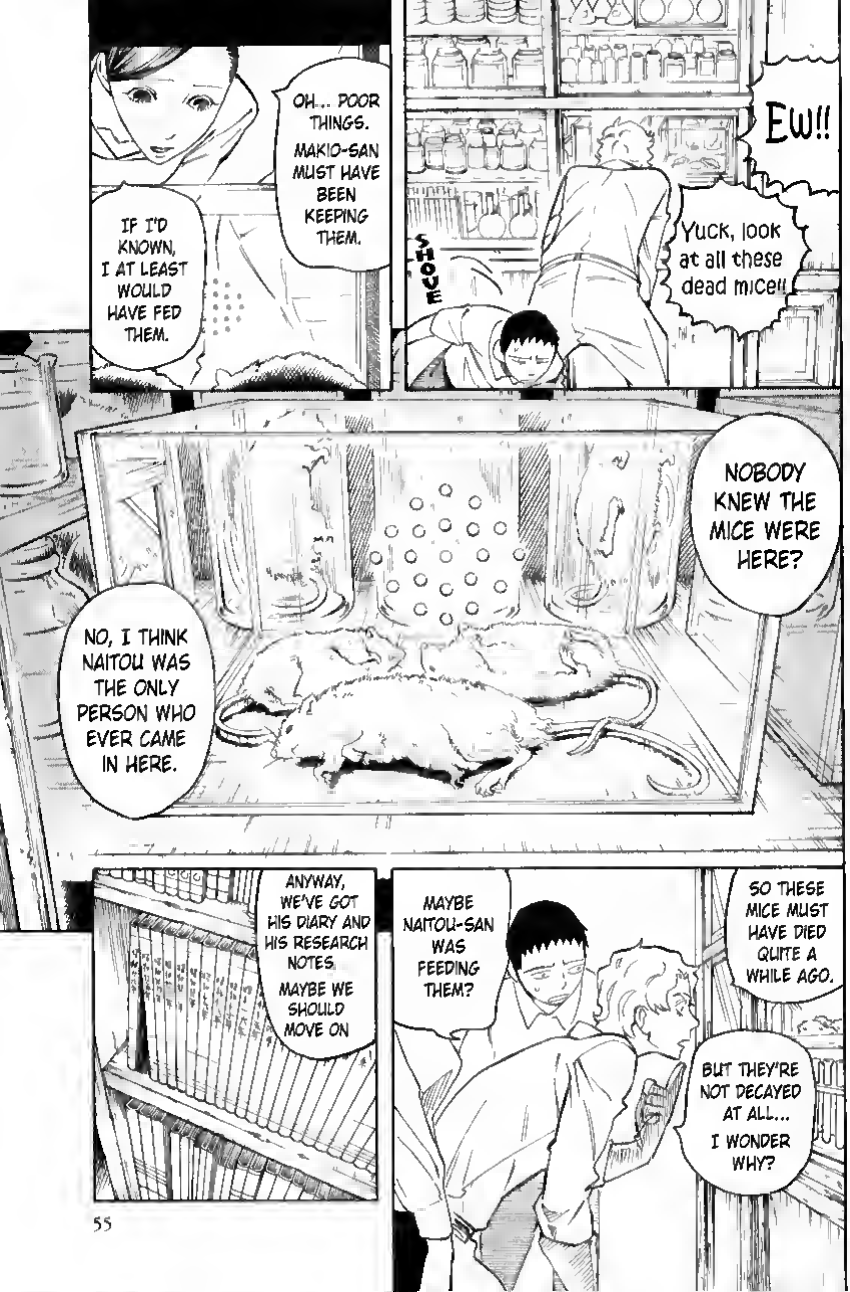


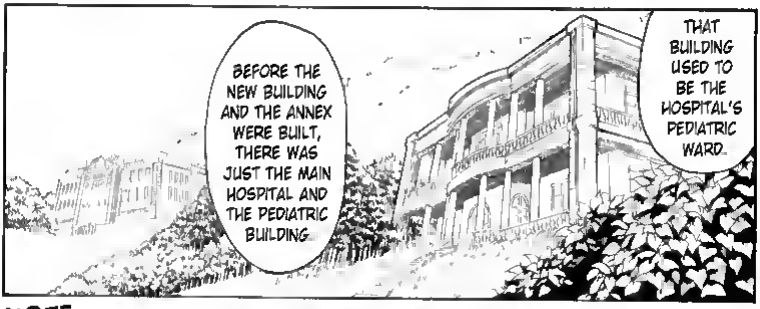
NOTE In Japan, dates are traditionally written as years of the current emperor's reign. Emperor Showa (better know as Hirohito) reigned from 1926 to 1989. The reign of the current emperor, Emperor Akihito, is known as the Heisei Era.

SHOWA 1 - 1926	
SHOWA 2 - 1927	
SHOWA 3 - 1928	
SHOWA 4 - 1929	
SHOWA 5 - 1930	
SHOWA 6 - 1931	
SHOWA 7 - 1932	
SHOWA 8 - 1933	
SHOWA 9 - 1934	
SHOWA 10 - 1935	
SHOWA 11 - 1936	
SHOWA 12 - 1937	
SHOWA 13 - 1938	
SHOWA 14 - 1939	
SHOWA 15 - 1940	
SHOWA 16 - 1941	
SHOWA 17 - 1942	
SHOWA 18 - 1943	
SHOWA 19 - 1944	
SHOWA 20 - 1945	
SHOWA 21 - 1946	
SHOWA 22 - 1947	
SHOWA 23 - 1948	
SHOWA 24 - 1949	
SHOWA 25 - 1950	
SHOWA 26 - 1951	

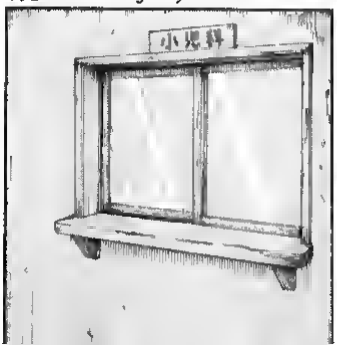


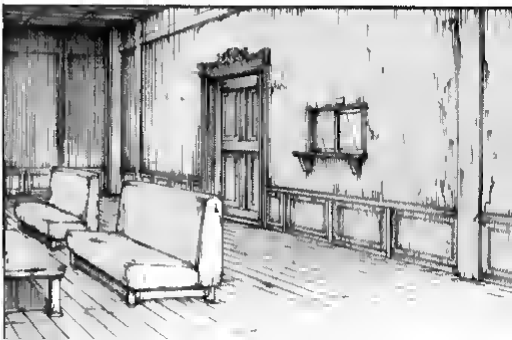
IT WAS JANUARY 8TH, 1951...
WELL, I SUPPOSE IT'S MORE CORRECT TO SAY THAT HE VANISHED EARLY IN THE MORNING OF JANUARY 9TH.


OH... POOR THINGS.
MAKIO-SAN MUST HAVE BEEN KEEPING THEM.
IF I'D KNOWN, I AT LEAST WOULD HAVE FED THEM.
SHOVE
Yuck, look at all these dead mice!!
Ew!!
NOBODY KNEW THE MICE WERE HERE?
NO, I THINK NAITOU WAS THE ONLY PERSON WHO EVER CAME IN HERE.
ANYWAY, WE'VE GOT HIS DIARY AND HIS RESEARCH NOTES. MAYBE WE SHOULD MOVE ON
MAYBE NAITOU-SAN WAS FEEDING THEM?
SO THESE MICE MUST HAVE DIED QUITE A WHILE AGO.
BUT THEY'RE NOT DECAYED AT ALL... I WONDER WHY?

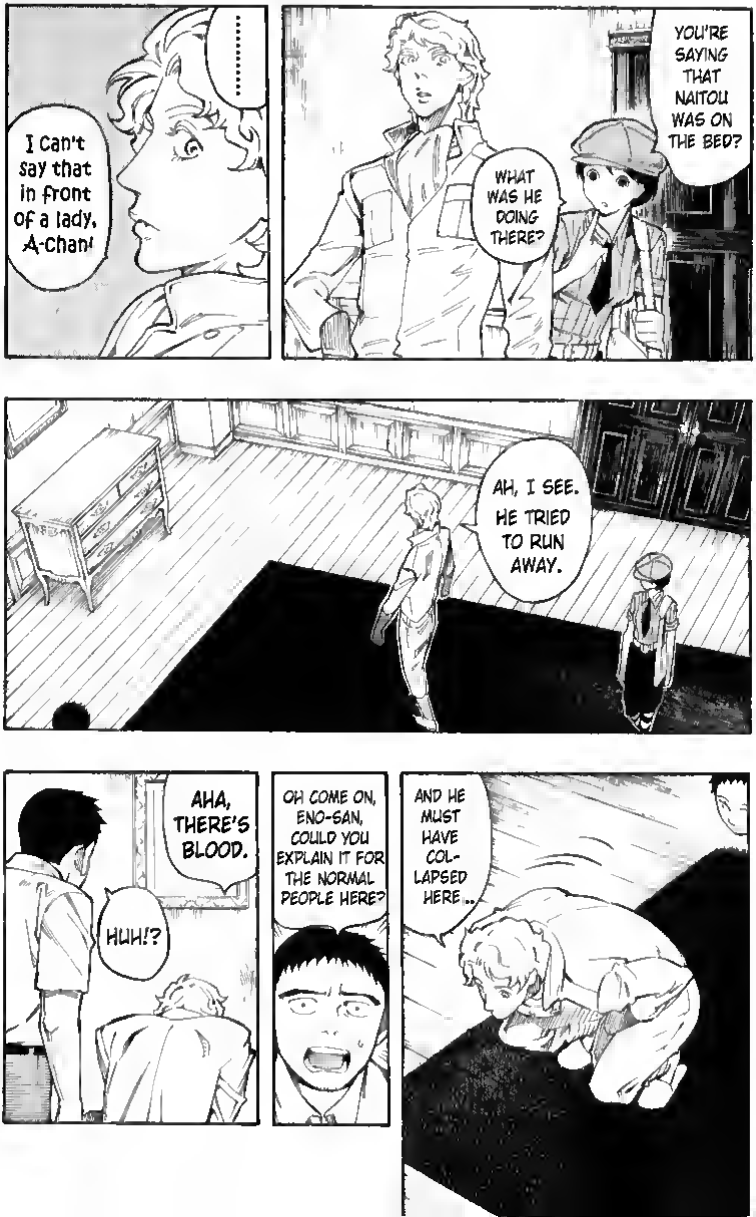

BEFORE THE NEW BUILDING AND THE ANNEX WERE BUILT, THERE WAS JUST THE MAIN HOSPITAL AND THE PEDIATRIC BUILDING.
THAT BUILDING USED TO BE THE HOSPITAL'S PEDIATRIC WARD.

NOTE The sign says "Pediatrics."





AH, SO THIS IS WHERE THE TRAGEDY TOOK PLACE...
BUT SINCE THE BUILDING WASN'T BEING USED, IT WAS CONVERTED INTO AN APARTMENT FOR THEM.
THIS WAS ORIGINALLY AN EXAM ROOM.
THE "TRAGEDY?" YOU MEAN THE DOMESTIC DISPUTE?
AND THEN THE HUSBAND SUDDENLY WALKED IN...
YOU COULD SAY THAT HE WAS ON THE BED RIGHT HERE...
HUH? WHO WAS ON THE BED?
OH.. YOU MEAN NAITOU.
Uchida or Saitou or whatever his name was
That emotionally unstable man


.....
I can't say that in front of a lady, A-chan!
YOU'RE SAYING THAT NAITOU WAS ON THE BED?
WHAT WAS HE DOING THERE?
AH, I SEE. HE TRIED TO RUN AWAY.
AND HE MUST HAVE COL-LAPSED HERE...
OH COME ON, ENO-SAN, COULD YOU EXPLAIN IT FOR THE NORMAL PEOPLE HERE?
AHA, THERE'S BLOOD.
HUH!?

SEE?

BUT WHOSE BLOOD COULD IT BE...?

THAT'S BECAUSE SOMEONE TRIED TO CAREFULLY CLEAN IT UP!
BUT THEY MUST HAVE BEEN IN A HURRY, BECAUSE THEY MISSED SOME OF THE BLOOD THAT HAD SOAKED INTO THE CARPET

BUT.. BUT WE NEVER NOTICED IT BEFORE..
IT REALLY IS BLOOD..

I DIDN'T SAY ANYTHING ABOUT MURDER
ANYWAY, THIS HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH THE CASE.
HUH?

IT BELONGS TO THE MISSING MAKIO-KUN, OF COURSE.

WHAT!? ARE YOU SAYING THAT MAKIO-SAN WAS MURDERED HERE!?

ENO-SAN, WHAT DID YOU SEE!?
PLEASE TELL US!!

SO WHATEVER TOOK PLACE IN THIS ROOM HAPPENED BEFORE HIS DISAPPEARANCE, AND IS THEREFORE IRRELEVANT TO THE CLIENT'S REQUEST.
THE LADY ASKED ME TO FIGURE OUT WHAT HAPPENED TO MAKIO-KUN, RIGHT?
AND IF HE'S ALIVE, SHE WANTED TO KNOW WHY HE DISAP-PEARED.

HUH?
IF YOU MUST KNOW...
I SAW A FROG.
I SAW A BABY...
WITH A FROG'S FACE.

COLLAPSE
RYOUKO-SAN!!

ENOKIZU-SAMA...
YOU SEE THINGS THAT ARE NOT OF THIS WORLD, DON'T YOU...?

.....

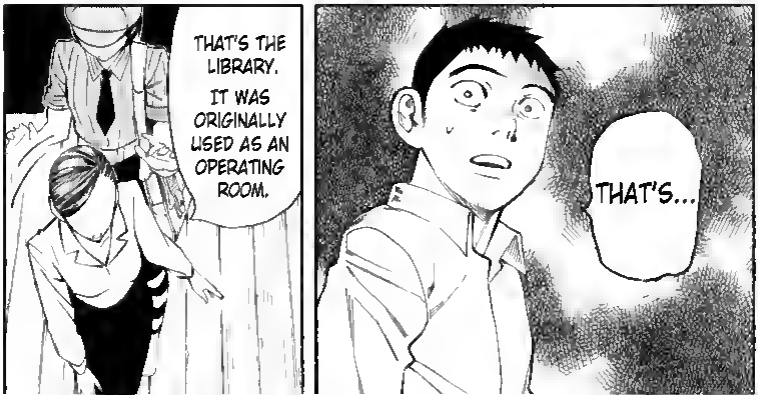
Nope, I actually only see things of this world!

HE WENT INTO THE NEXT ROOM...

NO...
HE DIDN'T DIE HERE.

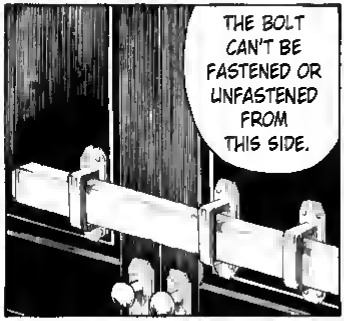
WHAT IN GOD'S NAME DID YOU SEE, ENO-SAN!?
DID MAKIO-SAN DIE IN THIS ROOM?

AND THEN HE LOCKED THE DOOR BEHIND HIM.


THAT'S THE LIBRARY.
IT WAS ORIGINALLY USED AS AN OPERATING ROOM.
THAT'S...

GLANCE

IF MY SISTER IS TO BE BELIEVED,
THEN MAKIO-SAN WENT INTO THIS ROOM AND VANISHED.


THE BOLT CAN'T BE FASTENED OR UNFASTENED FROM THIS SIDE.

SO THE DOOR CAN'T BE LOCKED FROM THIS SIDE?
THAT'S RIGHT. IT'S ACTUALLY MORE LIKE A BOLT THAN A LOCK.

AND SINCE IT'S A BOLT, NOT A LOCK, THERE'S NO EXTRA KEY..
AND THE DOOR IS SO TIGHTLY FITTED THAT YOU COULDN'T DO A TRICK WITH A PIECE OF THREAD TO LOCK IT FROM THE OUTSIDE.

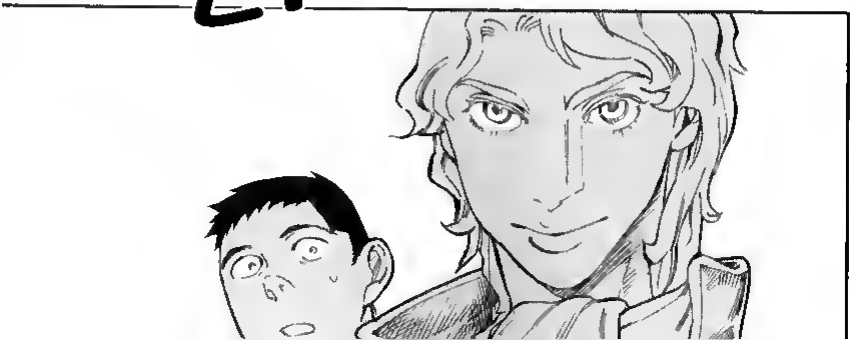
SINCE NO BODY WAS FOUND, THERE ARE STILL TWO OTHER POSSI-BILITIES.
EITHER HE FOUND A WAY TO SNEAK OUT OF THE ROOM .. OR HE REALLY DID DISAPPEAR THROUGH SOME SUPERNATURAL MEANS.
WHAT IF MAKIO-SAN NEVER ACTUALLY WENT INTO THAT ROOM?
BUT THAT WOULD CONFLICT WITH OUR WITNESS TESTIMONY...
RYOUKO-SAN, CAN WE?
WELL, WE WON'T KNOW UNTIL WE LOOK!
SUPER-NATURAL?
IS THAT REALLY POSSIBLE ...?
SO I'M AFRAID THAT ONLY ONE OF YOU CAN GO IN WITH ME...
NO, IT'S JUST THAT KYOUKO IS IN THERE...
SHE'S BECOME VERY FRAIL, AND SHE GROWS FRIGHTENED IF ANYONE OTHER THAN MYSELF ENTERS THE ROOM.
WELL...
IS THERE A PROBLEM?

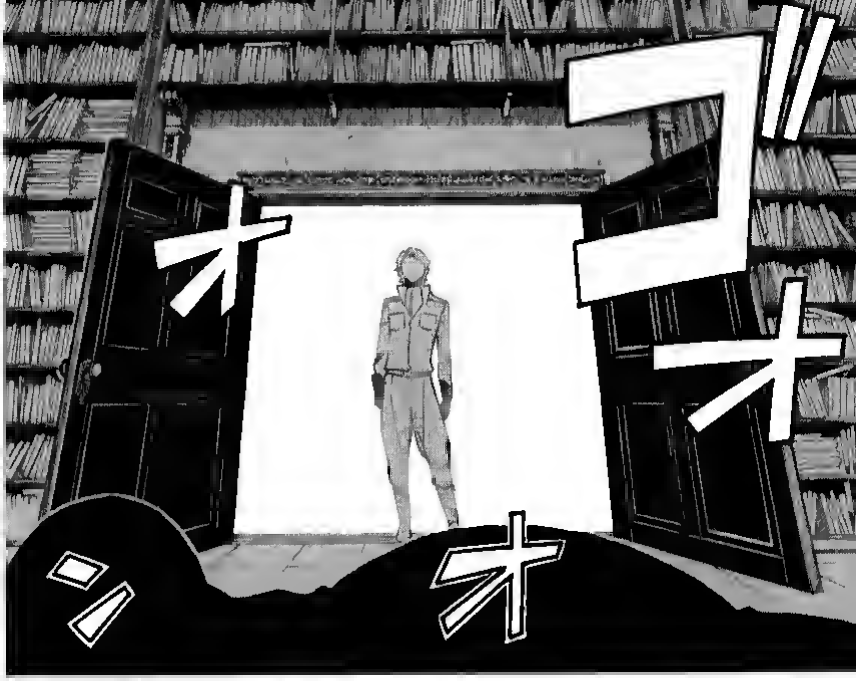
ALRIGHT, THEN I'LL GO LOOK FOR CLUES OUTSIDE!
HUH?
I SEE... WELL, THEN I'LL GO!

KYOUKO-SAN? IT'S ME.

DAMN IT...
I wanted to go inside

creak...





SFX: *menacing*

YOU SAW IT TOO, DIDN'T YOU?
IT WAS HORRIBLE...

WH-WHAT'S WRONG, ENO-SAN!?
SLAM

WH-WHAT!?
YOU CAN'T JUST SAY THINGS LIKE THAT!!

WHAT, ARE YOU GOING TO TELL ME THERE WAS ANOTHER FROG BABY!?
NO, BECAUSE I'M NOT A FREAK LIKE YOU!!

YOU KNEW SHE WAS PREGNANT!! WHY ARE YOU BEING SUCH A JACKASS ABOUT IT!?
THAT'S NOT WHAT I'M TALKING ABOUT!
YOU DIDN'T SEE IT?

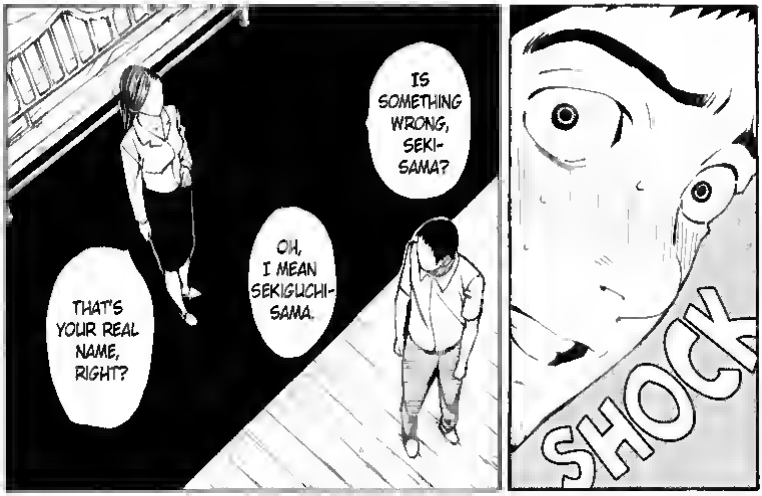
SEKI-GUCHI...
ARE YOU... OKAY?

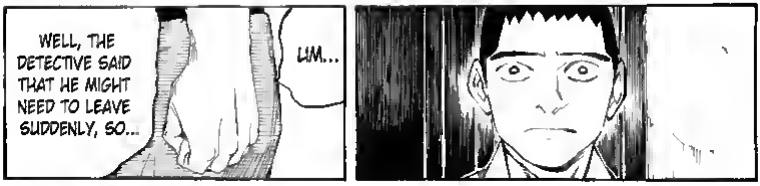
I'M FINE! WHATEVER, I'LL DO IT!
DO WHAT?
THE ONLY THING WE CAN DO AT THIS POINT IS CALL THE POLICE!
THE POLICE!? WHY DID YOU TAKE THIS CASE IN THE FIRST PLACE IF YOU'RE JUST GOING TO GO RUNNING TO THE POLICE!?
IF YOU'RE FLAKING OUT, THEN I'LL SOLVE THE MYSTERY MYSELF!!
.....
ARE YOU REALLY OKAY? I'M TELLING YOU, EVERYBODY IN THIS HOUSE IS CRAZY..
WHAT IF IT'S MAKING YOU CRAZY TOO?
THAT BOY MUST BE CRAZY...

I'M NOT CRAZY!!
YOU'RE THE ONE WHO'S CRAZY!!

...OKAY THEN.
THERE'S NOTHING ELSE I CAN DO HERE.
YOU SHOULD TALK TO KIBA LATER.
I'M NOT CRAZY!!
AND NEITHER ARE THESE PEOPLE!!

I'M NOT CRAZY...
I'M NOT CRAZY...
CLOSE
GASP
I HOPE I DIDN'T DO SOMETHING TO OFFEND ENOKIZU-SAMA...
OH MY...
SAN...
RYOU... KO...

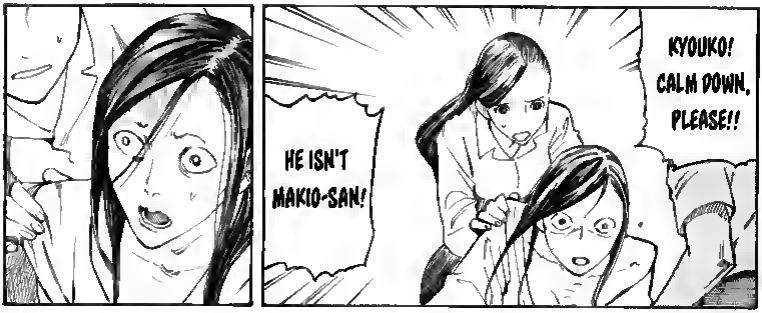

IS SOMETHING WRONG, SEKI-SAMA?
OH, I MEAN SEKIGUCHI-SAMA.
THAT'S YOUR REAL NAME, RIGHT?
SHOCK


WELL, THE DETECTIVE SAID THAT HE MIGHT NEED TO LEAVE SUDDENLY, SO...
UM...

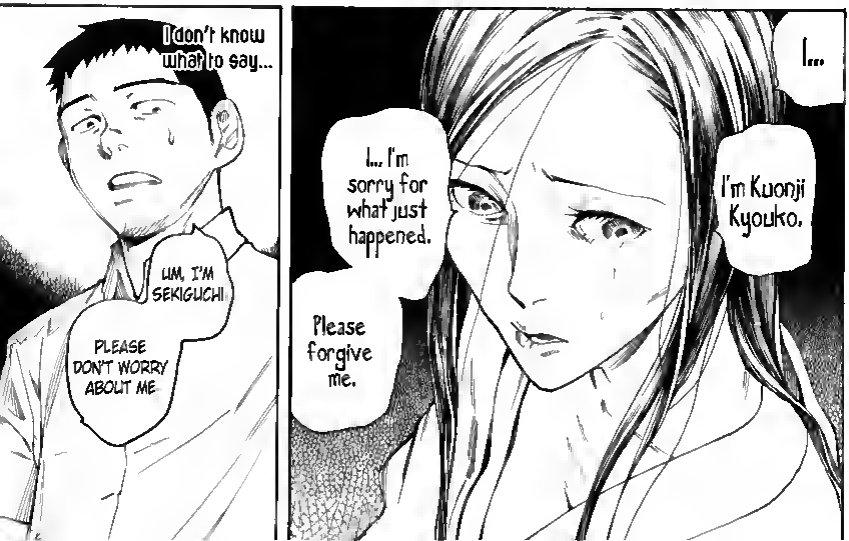
.....
NOT AT ALL.
THANK YOU, SEKIGUCHI-SENSEI.
I GUESS I'LL BE HANDLING THE CASE FROM NOW ON...
THAT IS, IF YOU DON'T OBJECT?

THIS IS MY SISTER, KYOUKO.
Oh crap, what should I say ?

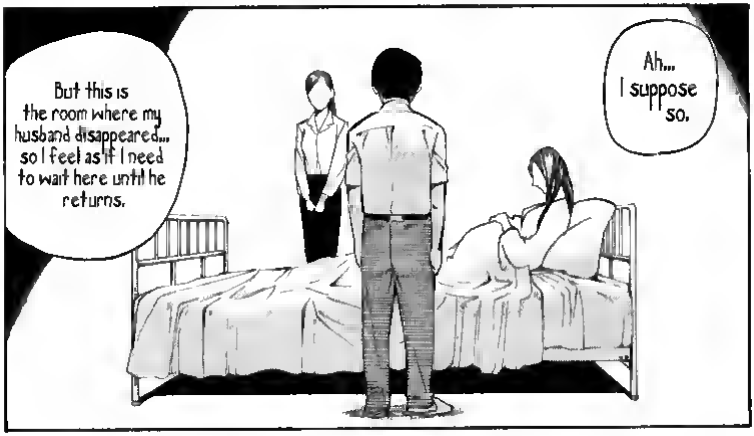
GRAB
MAKIO-SAN, WHERE HAVE YOU BEEN!?
MAKIO-SAN!!
I'M SO SORRY... I SWEAR I'LL BE A GOOD WIFE!
PLEASE, PLEASE FORGIVE ME!!
OH MAKIO-SAN, I'LL GIVE YOU THE CHILD YOU ALWAYS WANTED! LOOK HOW BIG HE'S GROWN!
KYOUKO-SAN!!
I... I'M NOT...


KYOUKO! CALM DOWN, PLEASE!!
HE ISN'T MAKIO-SAN!

Oh... sister... I'm so sorry...
I... I don't know what's happening to me...
IT'S ALRIGHT. EVERYTHING'S ALRIGHT, KYOUKO-SAN
HE'S HERE TO HELP.


I... I'm Kuonji Kyouko.
I... I'm sorry for what just happened.
Please forgive me.
I don't know what to say...
UM, I'M SEKIGUCHI
PLEASE DON'T WORRY ABOUT ME

WOULDN'T ONE OF THE OTHER ROOMS BE MORE COMFORTABLE?
SO, UM, YOU HAVEN'T LEFT THIS ROOM?

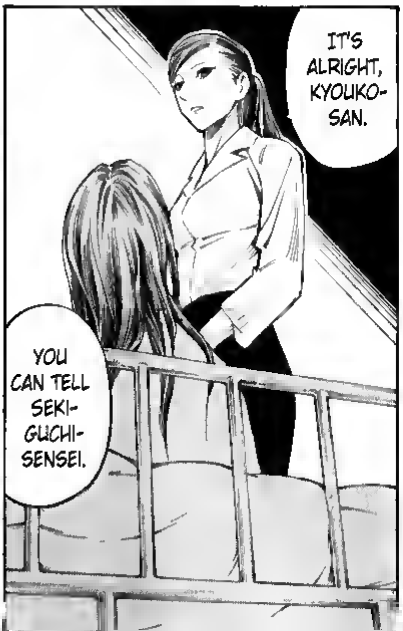

But this is the room where my husband disappeared... so I feel as if I need to wait here until he returns.
Ah... I suppose so.

We barely spoke to each other... and we never touched.
Little disagreements built walls between us...
All of it was my fault.
It's my fault... I was so stupid...
Oh... well, I'm afraid that we were never very close as a couple.
FORGIVE ME, BUT COULD I ASK YOU ABOUT YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH YOUR HUSBAND?

He never fought back.
No matter what I did to him, he never retaliated.
At the time, I thought he was weak...
So... I did something terrible...

SOMETHING TERRIBLE?
Ah
Yes...
The truth is...

...Yes, sister.


IT'S ALRIGHT, KYOUKO-SAN.
YOU CAN TELL SEKI-GUCHI-SENSEI.

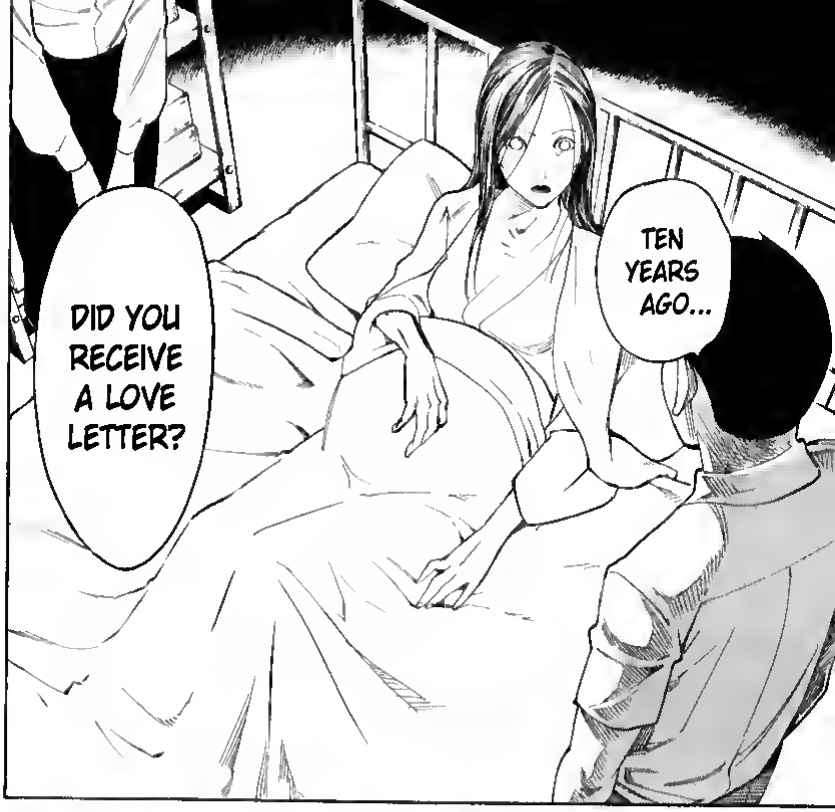
The truth is...
But I suppose I'll need to tell you the whole story...
It's so terrible that I can't even forgive myself...

I sus-
pected...
That my husband was having an affair...
With my sister.
Of course, it was all my imagi-nation.
Neither my sister nor my husband would ever do such a thing!
But...
But I...
IT'S ALRIGHT, I UNDER-STAND.
BUT COULD YOU TELL ME HOW YOUR HUSBAND REACTED TO THESE SUSPICIONS?
Well... he was always in his lab. He spent every evening there, and rarely returned until after I'd gone to bed.
That night was the same-

I have wonderful news!
My research is complete!
Kyouko!
Kyouko!
Kyouko!
Well...
I'm afraid that I don't remember.
Did Fujimaki-sempai really manage to create a homunculus!?
HE SAID THAT HIS RESEARCH WAS COMPLETE?
Yes, I think so.
SO... WHAT HAPPENED NEXT?
How could she forget something like that!?
HUH?

Why ...?
Why ...?
All I can remember...
Is my husband was so upset that he went into this room and closed the door behind him.
SLAM
"WHY?" WHAT DID YOUR HUSBAND MEAN WHEN HE SAID THAT?
I don't know.
I screamed and pounded on the door, but it wouldn't open... I must have gone mad that night.
I didn't come back to myself until morning, when I went to Nartou-san and my father for help.
Blood...?
UM...
THERE WAS BLOOD ON THE FLOOR, UNDER THE CARPET... DO YOU KNOW WHY?
Something is strange about her story

WHEN DID YOU CLEAN THE ROOM?
The next morning... I think.
I don't remember.
When I cleaned the room, I must have wiped it up...
I don't know... I suppose my husband or I could have been injured during the fight.
I thought that maybe if I cleaned the room, he would come out...
I was so worried that I started cleaning to distract myself.
JUST ONE MORE QUESTION...
But I don't want to ask it....
I can't think of any more questions...
No... there is one other question.
So any evidence that could have jogged her memory is long gone...
I SEE...

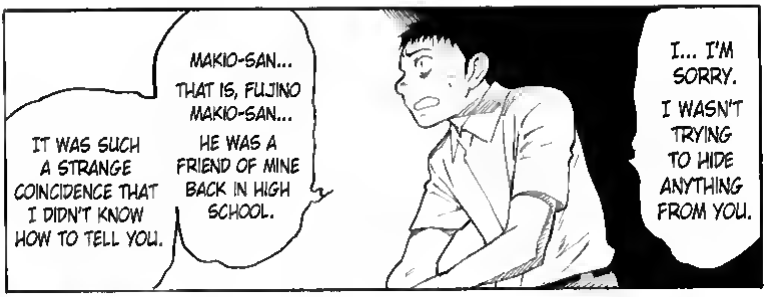

TEN YEARS AGO...
DID YOU RECEIVE A LOVE LETTER?

A...
A love letter ...!?

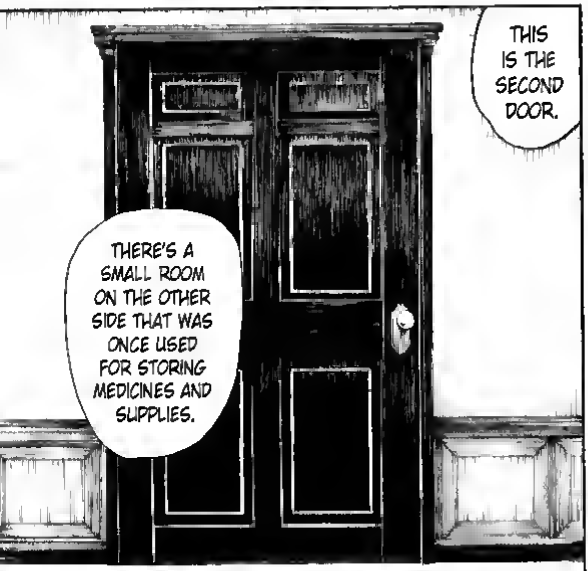
Why are you asking me that!?
WHY ARE YOU ASKING THE SAME THING HE ASKED!?
!?

I DON'T KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT THIS LOVE LETTER!
I NEVER GOT ANY LETTER!!
WHY WON'T YOU JUST LEAVE ME ALONE!?
WHY IS EVERYONE SO WORRIED ABOUT THIS LOVE LETTER!?
BUT... BUT YOU MUST HAVE RECEIVED IT!
I KNOW, BECAUSE I... BECAUSE I...
BECAUSE I'M THE ONE WHO GAVE IT TO YOU!!

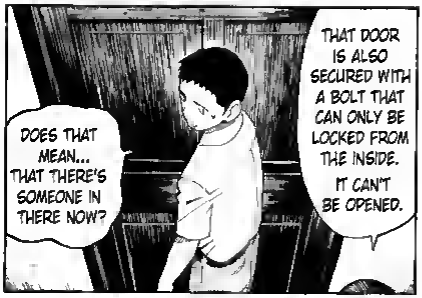
STAB
WHAT!?
I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT!!
.....
!!
I GAVE HER A SEDATIVE.
I'M AFRAID THAT SHE WON'T BE ABLE TO ANSWER ANY MORE QUESTIONS.
I don't know...
I don't know...
YOU'RE A MYSTERIOUS MAN, SEKIGUCHI-SAMA.
YOUR NAME ISN'T YOUR ONLY SECRET
WHAT ELSE ARE YOU HIDING?

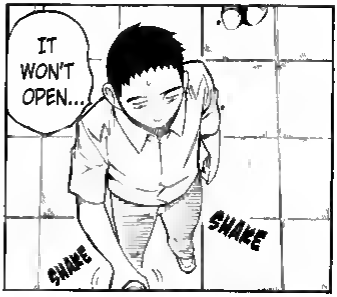

I... I'M SORRY.
I WASN'T TRYING TO HIDE ANYTHING FROM YOU.
MAKIO-SAN... THAT IS, FUJINO MAKIO-SAN...
HE WAS A FRIEND OF MINE BACK IN HIGH SCHOOL.
IT WAS SUCH A STRANGE COINCIDENCE THAT I DIDN'T KNOW HOW TO TELL YOU.

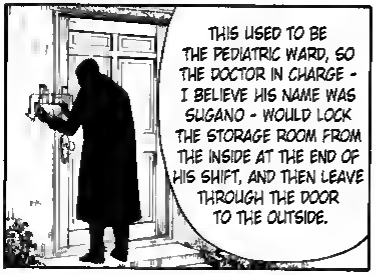
I DIDN'T EVEN REMEMBER THE LOVE LETTER UNTIL I CAME HERE TODAY.


THIS IS THE SECOND DOOR.
THERE'S A SMALL ROOM ON THE OTHER SIDE THAT WAS ONCE USED FOR STORING MEDICINES AND SUPPLIES.

RYOU-KO-SAN..
Please wait...


DOES THAT MEAN... THAT THERE'S SOMEONE IN THERE NOW?
THAT DOOR IS ALSO SECURED WITH A BOLT THAT CAN ONLY BE LOCKED FROM THE INSIDE. IT CAN'T BE OPENED.


IT WON'T OPEN...
SHAKE
SHAKE


THIS USED TO BE THE PEDIATRIC WARD, SO THE DOCTOR IN CHARGE - I BELIEVE HIS NAME WAS SUGANO - WOULD LOCK THE STORAGE ROOM FROM THE INSIDE AT THE END OF HIS SHIFT, AND THEN LEAVE THROUGH THE DOOR TO THE OUTSIDE.

THERE'S ANOTHER DOOR IN THAT ROOM THAT LEADS TO THE OUTSIDE.
NO.

So if Makio-san somehow found a way into the storage room he must still be inside

THERE'S NO SPARE COPY OF THE KEY.
SO THE STORAGE ROOM HASN'T BEEN OPENED IN MORE THAN SEVEN YEARS.
BUT SUGANO DIED DURING THE WAR, AND THE ONLY KEY WAS LOST...

WELL, THEN...
I'LL CALL FOR A CAR TO PICK YOU UP. PLEASE WAIT IN THE LOBBY.
I...
I thought I'd be able to bring some relief to this family.
Instead, I'm just bringing them more pain.
SEKI-GUCHI-SENSEI!

DID ENO-SAN SAY ANYTHING TO YOU?
.....
SENSEI, WHAT HAPPENED TO ENOKIZU-SAN?
I DON'T KNOW AND I DON'T CARE.
WELL .. I WAS LOOKING AROUND OUTSIDE THE BUILDING, AND I SAW ENOKIZU-SAN COME OUT...
HUH?
ENOKIZU-SAN, WAKE UP!
ugh
ENOKIZU-SAN!
ENOKIZU-SAN!
ENOKIZU-SAN!
WERE YOU TALKING TO ME?
huff
I CALLED YOU 4 TIMES!

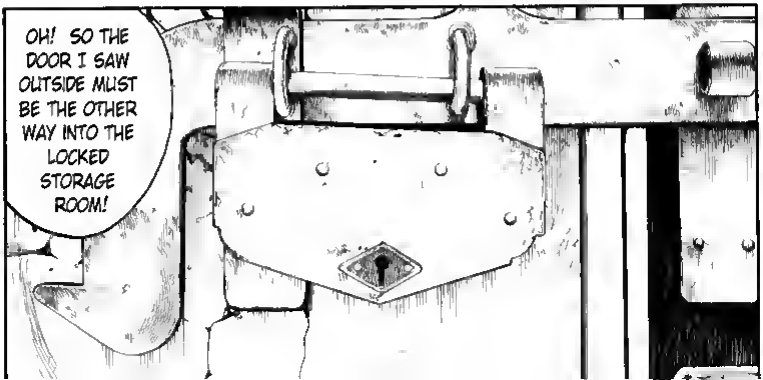
?
YES, THAT'S IT.
AHH, I SUPPOSE I JUST DIDN'T HEAR YOU. PERHAPS THERE WAS A SPIDER IN MY EAR?

?
?

AND WHATEVER YOU DO, DON'T GO INTO THAT ROOM!
ANYHOW, YOU SHOULD CALL THE COPS RIGHT AWAY, A-CHAN!

ANYWAY, I GOT TO LOOK INSIDE THE LIBRARY...

OF COURSE NOT!! I DON'T EVEN KNOW WHERE THE PHONE IS!
WELL? DID YOU CALL THE POLICE?


OH! SO THE DOOR I SAW OUTSIDE MUST BE THE OTHER WAY INTO THE LOCKED STORAGE ROOM!

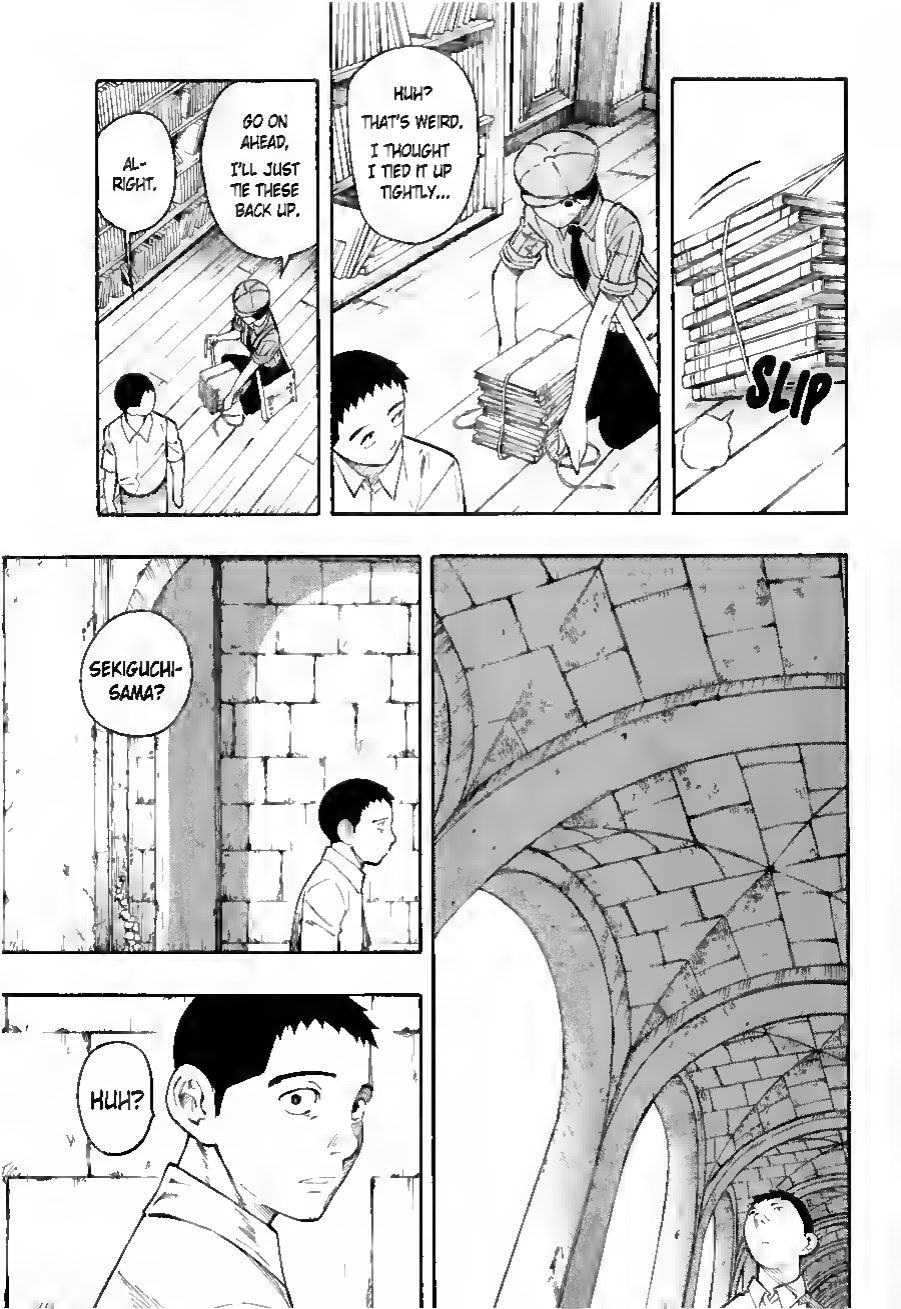
I DIDN'T SEE ANY-THING.
UNLESS HE MANAGED TO CLIMB THROUGH THE ROOF, THERE'S NO WAY HE COULD HAVE GOTTEN OUT.

I WONDER IF THAT'S THE ONLY WAY OUT OF THE STORAGE ROOM.
MAYBE THERE'S A BREAK IN THE WALL OR CEILING

YOU KNOW, I'M STARTING TO THINK THAT EVERYBODY IN THIS PLACE IS LYING...
Hm ..

I AGREE.
WELL, IN ANY CASE, I THINK WE OUGHT TO GO BACK AND GET THE DIARY AND RESEARCH NOTES
MAYBE WE'LL FIND MORE CLUES IN THERE

ACTUALLY, SENSEI, THERE'S A NEW POSSI-BILITY!
WHAT IF ONE OF OUR THREE WITNESSES HAD A KEY TO THIS LOCK?
AND WHAT IF THEY SECRETLY OPENED THE DOOR TO LET HIM ESCAPE?
MAYBE THEY PLANNED IT TOGETHER.


AL-RIGHT.
GO ON AHEAD, I'LL JUST TIE THESE BACK UP.
HUH? THAT'S WEIRD. I THOUGHT I TIED IT UP TIGHTLY...
SLIP
SEKIGUCHI-SAMA?
HUH?

THOSE FLO-WERS...
PICK
GRAB

THE PLANT CONTAINS PSYCHOTROPIC ALKALOIDS THAT CAN CAUSE DELIRIUM, HALLUCINATIONS, AND EVEN DEATH.
SOME PEOPLE CALL THEM "CRAZY WEED."
THEY'RE CALLED "DATURA..." MAYBE YOU KNOW THEM AS "KOREAN MORNING GLORY."
BE CAREFUL, THOSE FLOWERS ARE POISONOUS!
THIS HOSPITAL HAS BEEN AROUND FOR A LONG TIME, SO I GUESS IT MADE SENSE TO GROW A SUPPLY ON SITE.
IN THE EARLY DAYS OF MEDICINE, DATURA WERE USED TO MAKE SEDATIVES AND ANAES-THETICS
WHY WOULD ANYONE GROW SUCH A DANGEROUS FLOWER HERE?
OH MY... I HAD NO IDEA.

NOTE Datura flowers contain high levels of scopolamine, which is known as "the world's scariest drug." It causes confusion, suggestibility and memory loss, so it's often used for date rapes, robberies, interrogations and kidnappings. Until the 1960s, scopolamine was frequently administered to women in childbirth.

YOU'RE VERY KNOWLEDGEABLE ABOUT MEDICINE, SEKIGUCHI-SENSEI.
wobble
BUT I MEAN, I'M NOT AN EXPERT OR ANYTHING...
OH... WELL, I STUDIED PRE-MED FOR A WHILE IN COLLEGE...
THUD
HRRR
SEKI-GUCHI-SAMA...
collapse

Please...
dizzy
Save me...